Hafa Adai!

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Saipan Tribune

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INSIDE

BUSINESS

Russia's suddenly escalating financial crisis risks spilling beyond its borders and endangering parts of the global economy.

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ASIA

Taliban attacks on Pakistan

Taliban militants claim to have been behind dozens of attacks on Pakistani targets in 2014. More recent ones have been seen as retaliation for an army offensive on militant strongholds in the northwest that officially began in June.

The following are the biggest reported attacks this year:

Jan. 20: Suicide bomber kills at least 14 people at security checkpoint near Pakistani military headquarters in Rawalpindi.

Feb. 13: Suicide bomber rams explosives-laden car into police bus in southern Pakistan, killing 13.

June 8-10: Two attacks by Taliban fighters on Karachi airport, Pakistan's busiest, leave at least 28 dead.

June 15: Pakistan launches a major offensive in the Taliban

In the deadliest slaughter of innocents in Pakistan in years, Taliban gunmen attacked a military-run school Tuesday and killed 141 people–almost all of them students–before government troops ended the siege.

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LIFE & STYLE

Los Angeles prosecutors on Tuesday declined to file any charges against Bill Cosby after a woman recently claimed the comedian molested her around 1974.

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CUC, EPA at odds anew over projects' role

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

O'Brien

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are in disagreement again, this time over EPA's role over the implementation of identified CUC projects with the upcoming selection of the Engineering and Environmental Management Company, which will have the power to expeditiously complete the projects.

See CUC on Page 4

Visitor arrivals up 16 pct in November

November 2014 visitor arrivals to the CNMI jumped 16 percent compared to November 2013.

According to the Marianas Visitors Authority, arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota registered 39,137 visitors in November 2014, compared to 33,678 visitors received in November 2013.

Arrivals from Korea grew 31 percent in November to 16,227 visitors, positioning Korea as the No. 1 source of visitors to the CNMI in November and the largest monthly increase for the Korea market year-to-date.

Targeting the winter high season demand, Asiana Airlines will be operating additional flights to Saipan from Seoul four times a week beginning Dec. 2 using an Airbus A320 with 171 seats. The strong upward trend in Korean arrivals is expected to continue throughout the winter season with additional seats

See VISITOR on Page 4

SINGING POLICE CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Department of Public Safety caroling team led by Sergeant Joe Saures, seated second right, visits the staff and management of Pacifica Insurance Underwriters, Inc. at their office in Susupe.

Wiseman finds $170K as reasonable fee to lawyer, but not $782K

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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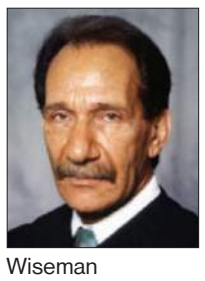
REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman yesterday found not reasonable a lawyer's request for payment of $782,363.74 in legal fees for representing then-administrator of an estate that received a grand total of $2.8 million from the government for just compensation over the taking of property and rental payments.

Wiseman, however, determined that $170,263.01 is the reasonable fee and ordered the estate of Rita Rogolofoi to pay an additional $99,256.76 to attorney Brien Sers Nicholas for his legal services.


Wiseman

The judge said $99,256.76 is the retainer agreement fee balance after deducting the $71,006.25 previously paid to Nicholas.

In finding that Nicholas' requested recovery of $782,263.74 was not reasonable, Wiseman ruled that Rita Rogolofoi's heirs have not approved the contingent fee agreement between the lawyer and then estate administrator Enrique Seman.

Wiseman said the retainer agreement, as twice amended, does not contain a valid contingent fee agreement.

See WISEMAN on Page 4

Local

New salary sked will cost CNMI $4.2M

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

A bill that will establish a new base salary schedule for classified civil service government employees as well as increase their salary ceiling will cost the CNMI $4.2 million, according to Joe Pangelinan, employee development and staffing chief Office of Personnel Management.

He, however, believes that the benefits coming from a new base salary schedule far outweigh the cost of the government implementing it.

According to Pangelinan the benefits in implementing a new base salary schedule and higher salary ceiling are:

- Promote consistency in fairness
- Bring our entry level starting salary closer to the federal minimum wage
- Will increase local minimum wage
- Will keep salaries competitive to that of neighboring Guam
- Eliminate retroactive payments for within-grade-increases
- Will mandate a fair minimum salary adjustment upon implementation
- Will eliminate the retroactive payments for WGIs
- Will eliminate the annual granting of WGIs
- Will repeal the bonus salary
- Will replace/substitute merit increase for merit bonus
- Will allow opportunity to improve CNMI classification and compensation plan
- Will enact a realistic salary schedule that have least budgetary impact
- Allow time for Legislature to identify funding source and fully implement salary act
- Will continue to provide autonomous agencies and other government organizations the option to utilize a new and improved salary schedule
- Will allow the Civil service Commission to finally fulfill its mandated responsibilities

Pangelinan said the last new base salary schedule was conducted was way back in 1991 and the last increase was implemented way back in 2002.

He said former representatives Dino Jones and Jesus Attao did introduce a new salary schedule in the late 1990s, but those proposals fell on the wayside.

House Bill 18-213, introduced by Rep. Ralph Demapan (R-Saipan) last week, hopes to remedy that.

Under the proposed new base salary schedule, a 35-pay level structure with 12 steps is used as the framework for the classification of civil service positions.

» Pangelinan: But benefits far outweigh cost

It starts with $6.25 per hour salary ($12,584 per year) for pay level 1, step 1 and increases by at least $0.10 until it reaches pay level 35, which is $17.95 per hour ($37,331.96 per year), step 1. Step 12 for the former is $8.60 per hour ($17,889.96 per year), while the same step for the latter is $25.52 per hour (53,072.73 per year).

Pangelinan said HB 18-213 will affect about 1,1000 classified civil servants in agencies like the Commonwealth Ports Authority, Northern Marianas College, administrative support staff of the Public School System, Mariana Islands Housing Authority, Commonwealth Development Authority, and the CNMI Judiciary.

"One of the duties of the Civil Service commissioner is to take care of civil servants. It's about time and it's more than due that this body proposes a bill or an act to introduce a new base salary schedule for classified civil servants," he said.

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Rota mayor off to Louisiana to check on cargo/passenger ship for island

By JAYSON CAMACHO
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REPORTER

Rota Mayor Melchor Mendiola is on his way to Louisiana to check and finish up on certifications for a $1.6-million retrofitted cargo and passenger ship that will help bring both passengers and cargo to and from Rota, Saipan, Tinian, Guam, and the Northern Islands.

In an interview yesterday evening, Sen. Victor Hocog (Ind-Rota) disclosed that Mendiola had gone to Boise, Idaho and from there he would fly to Louisiana to finish up certifications that needs to be worked on.

The certifications that need to be worked on are the requirements of rescue and passenger boats that will be on the ship.

Hocog said that it is possible that he will be hearing from Mendiola this Friday.

"Once the certification is done then we're ready to go," Hocog said.

In an earlier interview, Hocog said that the 150-foot, 500-ton cargo ship will be highly needed on Rota in terms of bringing in food and supplies and ferrying passengers to and from Rota.

Luta Mermaid LLC owner Takahisa Yamamoto made this possible investing a minimum of $1.6 million for the ship as reported earlier.

This ship can accommodate 18 passengers and carry up to 28 20-ft. containers.

Hocog earlier also said that it will be great for Rota's long-standing problems of shortage on food and other commodities every time the barge cannot reach Rota due to rough waters.

Songao: Irrigation district on Rota pulling through

By JAYSON CAMACHO
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REPORTER

Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board vice chair Diego Songao said that the irrigation district on Rota is slowly pulling through.

"I have talked to Sen. Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) and Sen. Victor Hocog (Ind-Rota) already, but we need to sit down and look at a proposed plan from the Army Corps of Engineer," Songao told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview yesterday.

Songao said that the proposed plan from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is comparative to the proposed water line and that he had met with one of the representatives from the Army Corps Engineers.

"He will be with us if he is going to discuss and see the waterline alignment and we need to take it and see it," Songao said.

Songao said that he was not sure how much to the extent of the infrastructure that the Army Corps of Engineers proposes in its plan, but it will determine the funds that are needed for the irrigation district to push through.

Songao also said that he wasn't sure when will it happen because he is still waiting on the Army Corps of Engineers.

According to Hocog they have signed the committee report.

"We signed the committee report and hopefully pass the committee report on Senate Bill 18-60," Hocog said.

SB 18-60 was introduced by Manglona, which will establish an irrigation district in each senatorial district for the use of water strictly for irrigation and agricultural purposes and not for residential uses and for other purposes.

In October, the CUC board met noting that if there were any infrastructure that CUC would not use, the Army Corps of Engineers then wants to use the area, and CUC can sell or lease it.

Bus driver arrested for allegedly impregnating 13-year-old girl

Police arrested on Tuesday in Gualo Rai a tour bus driver who allegedly raped a 13-year-old girl, causing her to become pregnant.

Hank Kenney Peredo Taitano, 35, was arrested for sexual abuse of a minor, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace.

At a hearing yesterday, Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman said due to the egregious allegations, he kept the $100,000 cash bail that the court had earlier imposed in issuing an arrest warrant.

Preliminary hearing will be on Dec. 24 at 9am.

Assistant public defender Eden Schwartz was appointed counsel for Taitano.

Detective Therese S. Kintoki stated in her report that two police officers responded to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. last Nov. 28 after a Division of Youth Services personnel reported a sexual abuse of a minor incident.

Kintoki said at CHCC emergency room, the officers met the DYS personnel, the alleged victim, and the alleged victim's stepfather.

The DYS staff informed the officers that a doctor called her regarding a sexual abuse of a minor case.

Kintoki said during her interview, the alleged victim stated that at the end of June to early July, she spent time with Taitano at his apartment in San Antonio.

While the girl was sleeping in a bedroom, Taitano allegedly came inside the room, held her hands and sexually abused her.

The girl said she was crying and begging Taitano to get off her, but he was strong.

The girl told Taitano that she would tell her mother about what he did, but the suspect threatened that he would call the police and tell them she was making up stories.

The girl told police that she did not tell anyone on what happened because she was afraid and ashamed. She claimed that she has been bullied in school and scared that she would be bullied more if students and other people found out what happened to her.

Kintoki said the girl's mother and her stepfather were wondering why her stomach was getting bigger and showing signs of pregnancy so they made an appointment with a doctor.

During the checkup last Nov. 28, Kintoki said, the doctor told the girl's mother and her husband that the girl is four months pregnant.

The doctor then called DYS. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Hank Kenney Peredo Taitano covers his face with papers as a court marshal escorts him outside a courtroom after a bail hearing yesterday morning. Also in the photo is Taitano's counsel, assistant public defender Eden Schwartz, and another defendant in a separate case. The court set a $100,000 cash bail for Taitano, who is facing charges that he raped a 13-year-old girl, causing her to become pregnant.

Rota's Jingco and Tinian's Rodriguez win Christmas in the Marianas artwork contest

By JAYSON CAMACHO
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REPORTER

Rota Sinapalo Elementary School's Lovely Jingco and Tinian Elementary School's Clarence Rodriguez won this year's Christmas in the Marianas art contest.

For Sinapalo, second place winner is James Atalig and third place winner is Bernie Lynn H. Poll. For Tinian Elementary, second place winner is Jerimiah Hofschneider and third place winner is Cielo Long.

Although the schools from Rota and Tinian were not present this year for the event, Paseo de Marianas Promoters, Inc. decided to get the children from Tinian and Rota involved through an art contest.

PDM coordinator Sonia Siwa said that the judges had already finished the tabulation and posted the winners at the PDM area.

"The theme of the drawing contest was 'My Holiday Greetings to our Visitors' participants are all elementary students from Tinian and Rota. The criteria is for its attractiveness and colorfulness and should be island tradition themed," Siwa said.

This is the 8th year that the schools had joined the Christmas in the Marianas.

"We don't want these children to be left out of our celebration since this event is for the children of the CNMI so they are part of it," Siwa said.

Prizes will be given as well to the students. First place will receive $50, second is $30, and third is $20. All those who entered the competition will receive school kit gift each.

This year, Rota submitted 96 entries and Tinian submitted 97 entries.

Siwa said that they will announce the winners again on Dec. 27, 2014.

5 Saipan beaches red-flagged

The Division of Environmental Quality has red-flagged five Saipan beaches and is advising the public not to fish or swim within 300 feet of these locations for the next 48 hours or until otherwise notified.

Affected sites are Dai-Ichi Hotel, Dai-Ichi Drainage, Samoa Housing, Hafa-Adai Hotel, and Chalan Kanoa District 2 Drainage.

Samples collected from these locations contained excessive concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria (enterococci) that exceeded the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards. These bacteria can indicate the presence of human and animal waste in the water.

DEQ analyzes water samples collected from Saipan's recreational beaches and storm drainage every Tuesday. For more information, contact DEQ at 664-8500. ***(DEQ)***

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IT&E would like to remind its RESIDENTIAL, GOVERNMENT & BUSINESS customers that current billing of accounts are due on or before **Monday, December 22**. Payments not received by close of business on **December 20** will result in temporary suspension of all telephone services after 6:00PM on that day.

To prevent temporary suspension, customers are hereby advised to kindly pay their bills on or before **Monday, December 22**. Disputed billings must be brought to IT&E's attention in person or in writing by **Monday, December 22**. Customers must pay any current amount due, to avoid disconnection.

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V6 3.0L A/T
MILEAGE: 110,365
$3,800

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4 CYL. 1.7L A/T
MILEAGE: 101,224
$6,800

2009 NISSAN ALTIMA 2.5S
4CYL 2.5L A/T
MILEAGE: 45,339
$12,800

2010 KIA SOUL
4CYL 2.0LA/T
MILEAGE: 64,159
$12,800

2005 HONDA ACCORD EX
4CYL 2.4L A/T
MILEAGE: 83,596
$9,800

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V6 4.0L A/T
MILEAGE: 86,538
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Man gets 27-month prison term for 'ice' distribution

The federal court yesterday slapped a 27-month prison term against Daniel A. Castro who pleaded guilty to distribution of methamphetamine or "ice."

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona gave Castro credit for time served.

Upon completing the jail term, Castro will be placed on three years of supervised release.

The defendant was ordered among other things, to perform 100 hours of community work service, pay a $100 special assessment fee, and participate in a substance abuse treatment program.

Manglona granted the U.S. government's motion to dismiss the remaining three counts.

Assistant U.S. attorney Ross Naughton recommended that Castro be sentenced to 21 months in prison which is at the low end of the sentencing guidelines and consistent with the plea agreement.

Attorney Timothy Bellas, court-appointed counsel for Castro, recommended the same sentence.

Last April, Castro signed a plea agreement with the U.S. government and pleaded guilty to count one of the indictment charging him with distribution of methamphetamine.

According to the factual basis of the plea deal, on May 29, 2013 on Saipan, the defendant intentionally distributed "ice."

Castro met the law enforcement's confidential source in the parking lot of the Royal Poker arcade in San Antonio. He entered the passenger side of the confidential source's vehicle and provided the CS .60 grams of "ice" in exchange for $400. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

WISEMAN

From Page 1

The judge further ordered that prior to said payment, administrator Clarence E. White shall submit, on or before Dec. 29, 2014, an accounting of funds available for distribution and pending obligations.

According to court records, in November 2004, then-administrator Seman retained the services of attorney Nicholas to represent him in Rita Rogolofoi estate's probate matter and in the separate, but related action, the Board of Marianas Public Lands Authority versus the heirs of Rita Rogolofoi.

Seman and Nicholas executed a retainer agreement, wherein Seman agreed to pay the lawyer $175 per hour for his legal services on the probate case, and a contingent fee based on any recovery obtained in land quiet title action.

On Oct. 7, 2005, Nicholas and Seman signed an amendment to the retainer agreement. The amendment specifically stated that the fees listed in the agreement include representation "in any appellate proceedings and in any action or lawsuit wherein client is a party thereto in whatever capacity."

On May 12, 2009, the Superior Court entered a judgment in favor of the administrator in the quiet title action, awarding the heirs to the estate of Rogolofoi fee simple ownership and titles to two lots containing some 33,927 square meters.

The heirs were also awarded a total of $2,690,020.07, which represented "just compensation" for certain government takings and rental payments collected by the Department of Public Lands, plus 9 percent post-judgment interest.

The total judgment award plus post-judgment interest came out to a grand total of $2,844,566.64.

Pursuant to the retainer agreement and negotiations with the administrator, Nicholas sought 30 percent of the grand total recovery for a total sum of $853,369.99 in attorney's fees.

On Dec. 20, 2010, Nicholas and Seman entered into another amendment to the retainer agreement.

On March 12, 2012, Superior Court Presiding Judge Robert C. Naraja entered an order after a Jan. 4, 2011 hearing related to Nicholas' fees.

The order stated that "if the heirs approve the contingency fee then so will the court. Otherwise, the court will conduct a further analysis to determine whether the retainer agreement is valid and whether the contingency fee is reasonable."

The order concluded that claimant Nicholas' petition was granted in part by "awarding counsel attorney fees in the amount of $71,006.25."

The court, however, stayed "its order on the retainer agreement balance of $782,363.74, pending approval of the heirs.

Based upon the court's March 12, 2012 order, the estate paid Nicholas in the amount of $71,006.25.

In 2013, Judge Naraja transferred the probate matter to Judge Wiseman.

Nicholas then filed a petition for instructions, requesting that the court address the matters regarding the remaining balance of his attorney's fees claim in the amount of $782,363.74.

In his order issued yesterday, Wiseman said Nicholas failed to overcome the presumption that the subsequently entered contracts between Nicholas and administrator were invalid.

Wiseman said Nicholas twice amended the retainer agreement in this matter.

Therefore, the judge said, the issue is whether Nicholas made a sufficient showing of facts to overcome the presumption that he and the then-administrator Seman entered into invalid contracts.

"Here, the court cannot find in favor of claimant," he said.

Wiseman said the 2010 amendment also affirms the contingent fee agreement at 30 percent the amount of recovery, and requires the estate to pay $853,369.99 to Nicholas.

Wiseman said while he understands that Nicholas' modifications to the initial contract represent an effort to reduce the burden to the estate, the fact that the final invoice amount is $853,369.99 gives the court pause to question whether the 2010 amendment—and by logical extension, the original contingent fee agreement—were, in fact, valid attorney-client contracts.

Wiseman said Nicholas provided the court with explanations as to the terms of the retainer agreement, and as to the terms of the amendments, but little information as to how those contracts came to be.

Therefore, the judge said, he cannot determine whether the administrator agreed to the two retainer agreements amendments "freely and with a full understanding as to his or her rights, and after a fair and full disclosure of the facts."

Thus, Wiseman said, the 2010 amendment to the retainer agreement raises a clearly legitimate question whether the contingent fee was consistent with the client's best interest—and the interests of the heirs to the estate, whom the administrator owes a fiduciary duty.

Wiseman cited that ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct, Rule 15 provides: "When there is doubt about whether a contingent fee is consistent with the client's best interests, the lawyer should offer the client alternative bases for the fee and explain their implications."

The judge said as Nicholas drafted the language to the 2010 amendment, he should have known what his fees would have been if they were based on his hourly rate.

"This court found that amount to be $71,006.25, calculated at claimant's hourly rate of $175 for the 405.75 hours that claimant spent on the quiet title action," he said.

Thus, Wiseman pointed out, the amount of money the estate agreed to pay Nicholas was more than 12 times the amount of money the estate would have paid him under his hourly billing rate.

Wiseman said he cannot say for certain whether Nicholas gave the administrator a choice to consider alternative fee arrangements in light of the potential for a substantial pay out from the estate funds.

Accordingly, the judge pointed out, Nicholas also failed to show that the $853,369.00 price tag for his legal services was not exorbitant, and that it did not exceed a fair and reasonable remuneration for the services rendered.

Wiseman said Nicholas carries a heavy burden to show that the amendments to the retainer agreement overcome the presumption of invalidity.

"Here, he did not meet this burden. Therefore, the court finds the contingent fee agreement to be invalid," he said.

Wiseman said he gives credit to Nicholas for achieving in a jury trial the grand total award of $2,844,566.64 for the estate.

In addition, the judge said, the lawyer negotiated a stipulated dismissal of an appeal.

On balance, Wiseman said, he finds that Nicholas should be entitled to an additional award of $99,256.76 for a grand total award of $170,263.01.

The judge said Nicholas in a footnote of his memorandum proposes that he paid an additional sum of $99,256.76.

CUC

From Page 1

CUC, through counsel James S. Sirok, has filed a motion, requesting the U.S. District Court for the NMI to clarify the court's order as they relate to the management responsibilities of the EEMC over the various projects directed and mandated by "stipulated order number 2."

Sirok raised the question before the court whether the EEMC order is to be construed to mean that the EEMC is responsible for the implementation and management of all EPA identified 13 SO2 projects during the term of its contract.

"The reason that CUC is raising the issue now is that it is crucial that all parties and the selected EEMC understand the scope of the EEMC's duties and responsibilities prior to executing a contract to perform services under the order," Sirok said.

The SO2 projects include the CUC pipeline; tank erection cleanout and testing; secondary containment; and used oil disposal, and others.

Sirok said under the provisions of the EEMC order, CUC believes that the EPA does not have the authority to micromanage the SO2 projects and SO2 project management responsibilities of the EEMC.

In EPA's response, U.S. Department of Justice Environmental Enforcement Section senior attorney Bradley R. O'Brien said CUC's position that EPA does not have the authority to direct whether the EEMC, CUC, or EPA will implement SO2 projects is incorrect.

O'Brien said CUC's self-described "13 SO2 projects" are not part of the EEMC order but are among the projects required under SO2, which the EEMC order expressly did not modify, preclude, or impact.

O'Brien said the EEMC order provides EPA general authority to prioritize projects, select the entity to implement the project, and oversee the work.

"As the regulatory environmental agency, the EEMC order provides EPA a substantial role in selecting the projects that will be implemented by the EEMC and overseeing how the work is implemented," he said.

O'Brien said it appears that CUC is attempting to leverage the EEMC order to resolve CUC's numerous contracting issues relating to its failures to implement SO2 projects.

O'Brien said CUC's motion seeks to place CUC's longstanding contract disputes involving numerous parties on the EEMC's shoulders without the consent of the EEMC or the contractors.

"The impact of CUC's position is not supportable and would result in imposing CUC's contracts upon the court, the court's relationship with the EEMC, and undermining available funding," the EPA counsel added.

In CUC's reply, Sirok said the conduct of "selecting" the projects that will be implemented by EEMC is drastically different than the conduct of "prioritizing" the projects that will be implemented by the EEMC.

"Simply put, there is no provision in the EEMC order which clearly states that EPA has the ability to unilaterally select which SO2 projects the EEMC will implement and manage," Sirok said.

Last September, U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge David O. Carter approved a settlement agreement entered by EPA, CUC, and the CNMI government that will require the CNMI government to, among other things, deposit over $22.8 million until 2018 to complete some stalled CUC projects.

The order gave parties 45 days to submit proposed potential EEMCs for court approval. The judge extended the deadline by an additional 23 days upon the parties' request.

The appointment of EEMC shall be for five years, unless terminated earlier with the court's approval.

From 15 interested candidates for EEMC position, EPA has reportedly narrowed down to three firms that are being provided for the court's consideration.

VISITOR

From Page 1

coming on-line.

Arrivals from China grew 44 percent in November to 13,874 visitors. The MVA joined with Century Tours and Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino to host an NMI booth at China International Travel Mart, the most influential travel show in China, which was held in Shanghai on Nov. 14-16. To highlight the CNMI's culture, the MVA sent five performers to present a cultural experience on-site, which hugely boosted destination awareness during the three-day trade show.

Arrivals from Japan fell 15 percent to 7,023 visitors in November. During the month of November alone, the yen depreciated by 8 percent, making travel to the CNMI 8 percent more expensive for Japanese in the month of November alone. As a result of the consumption tax hike in April, data indicates that Japan's economy has now officially fallen into recession. Despite these strong headwinds in the market, Japan Airlines will operate two direct charter flights from Chubu Centrair International Airport on Dec. 27 and Dec. 30 using B737 aircraft, providing 288 additional seats with all seats sold exclusively by JTB World Vacations.

Arrivals from Russia fell 82 percent to 245 visitors in November following the suspension of direct flights in August. Russia's economic instability and collapsing Russian ruble have caused a dramatic fall in demand for international travel from Russia. Despite these challenges, the MVA is in discussions with potential airlift partners to re-establish direct non-stop flights from Russia to the NMI and is actively working with key Russian travel agents to create new tour packages targeting tourists with higher income who are less responsive to soaring tour prices to the NMI as a result of the collapsing currency.

Source markets economic highlights

As of November, the Japanese government continues to uphold a positive view of the economy, despite the recent release of data showing Japan had fallen into recession following the April consumption tax hike. According to the Cabinet Office "the Japanese economy is on a moderate recovery, while weakness can be seen in private consumption." The yen appreciated against the dollar, from 108.17 yen to the dollar at the end of October, to 117.33 yen as of Nov. 27.

Korea's total external debt was $429.1-billion at the end of September, a decrease of $13.1-billion from the previous quarter. The South Korean won/dollar exchange rate rose 35.55 won over the past month to close at 1087.19 against the U.S. dollar.

China's retail sales climbed 12% year-on-year to 21.31 trillion yuan (US$3.47 trillion) in the first 10 months of 2014. The U.S. and China have reached a landmark agreement that grants travelers in both countries 10-year multiple-entry visas and boosts the tourism trade's efforts to lure more Chinese visitors to American shores. The value of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, weakened by 33 basis points to 6.1420 against the U.S. dollar in its central parity rate, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trading System.

In a recent interview the president of Russia declared that Russia's GDP in 2014 is estimated at 0.4-0.5 percent. The ruble/US dollar exchange rate was highly volatile throughout November. The exchange rate on the last day of November is recorded at 49.32 rubles to the dollar.

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Winchell's
celebrates grand opening of new location today

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Winchell's celebrates the grand opening of its new location today, right at the corner of Coral Tree Avenue or the former Remington Hotel. The grand opening will start at 4pm today with a blessing ceremony and a small party for its vendors. A Christmas party for its employees will follow.

ADVERTISING Feature

Operations manager Laidy Ignacio would like to thank the community for its undying support over the nearly the 30 years Winchell's has been operating on Saipan and Guam. They first opened shop on Saipan in 1987, according to her.

Ignacio has been with the donut and coffee shop for 27 years. Starting as a clerk, she moved up to become supervisor, and then store manager, and then operations manager for both Winchell's locations on island.

"It hasn't all been easy," she said. "But I enjoy what I'm doing."

And the community enjoys her work, too. With the hot coffee, clam chowder, and dozens of donuts it has to offer, children, couples, tourists, and whole families have come to appreciate what the modest coffee shop has had to offer since 1987.

The long-time Winchell's employee even noticed the face of this reporter. "Oh, you're Norman's son!" she said. She joked that she'd still be around when I eventually bring my own kids, too.

Winchell's president Jane Noble first opened "Bugler Winchell," a coffee and donut shop in Tokyo, Japan in the early '80s, Ignacio said. But the shop could not make much business and closed, she added.

Noble then tried her luck in Guam and Saipan, and the shops have remained in the islands since then. "I remember some other donut shops that have started before," Ignacio said. "But Winchell's is still here."

She described the shop as the "pioneer for donuts" in the islands.

The shop is also expected to have new additions to their menu soon.

"Keep posted," operations consultant Margerie Acebedo said to all Winchell's patrons out there. "Be looking out for our new products coming up next year. We'll have new drinks and new value combos to captivate all our all our cultures on island."

This would add to the bento boxes, sub sandwiches, bagels, pandesal, muffins, soups, coffee drinks, and donuts they already offer.

Ignacio maintained that while they saw that their new location could provide better exposure for lighting and tourists, Winchell's is still a family location.

"We want locals to be our main priority," she said.

The new Winchell's features a more comfy and spacious design, she said, and enjoys a fair amount of sun. With their accommodating staff, she said, she hopes to meet the community for their donuts and coffee needs for years to come.

DENNIS B. CHAN

Long-time Winchell's employees and staff, from right, Lilein Boaz, operations manager Laidy Ignacio, and store manager Boboy Borja pose for a photo at their new location in Garapan yesterday.

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on the
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VFW recognizes top student essayists from MHS, MCS

THOMAS MANGLONA II

Saipan International School teacher Adam Harris smiles as he receives the Citizenship Education Teacher Award.

Saipan Veterans of Foreign War officials pose with winning student essayists last Friday during the awarding ceremony. From second to the left, Earl Tabora, Justin Ocampo, Cathryn Javier, Andrea Lazaro, and and Mary Grace Tiglao hold their cash prizes and certificates.

THOMAS MANGLONA II

By THOMAS MANGLONA II
CORRESPONDENT

The Veterans of Foreign Wars on Saipan awarded top students who participated in this year's Voice of Democracy and the Patriot's Pen Youth Essay competition.

A ceremony was held at the VFW Garapan Office last Friday to award the student essayists as well as two teacher recipients of the Citizenship Education Teacher Award.

Marianas High School student Mary Grace Tiglao placed first in the Voice of Democracy Essay competition for the high school division. Her 5-minute essay on why Veterans are important to the nation also earned her first place in the Guam district-level competition, thus moving her up to the Asian regional competition in the Philippines.

"It is truly amazing that I can contribute to an essay that honors our veterans," she said. "They are the source of our key knowledge. I've learned from my JROTC instructors that being a veteran or soldier is not an easy thing."

She added, "Our freedom is not free after all."

Pete Callaghan of the VFW told *Saipan Tribune* that the purpose of the competition is to promote patriotism and citizenship. "We hope to educate students about being an American essentially."

Mount Carmel School senior student Andrea Lazaro placed second, with fellow Knight Cathryn Javier in third place.

Mount Carmel School dominated the middle school division, as 8th grade students Justin Ocampo and Earl Tabora garnered first and second place, respectively. In addition to his local win, Ocampo placed 2nd in the Guam district level competition. Marianas Baptist Academy's Ian Cataluna came in third.

The winners of each category received certificates and cash prizes.

One middle school and high school teacher was also recognized at the ceremony for their commitment to teaching citizenship and American history.

Marianas Baptist Academy high school teacher Paul Murphy received the award for his division, but was not present at the awarding.

Saipan International School middle-school social studies teacher Adam Harris received the Citizenship Education Teacher Award as well.

Harris, who has been teaching on island for two years, said "it is always nice to be noticed by someone outside other than students and parents." He added, "This is just more motivation to continue teaching to ensure that my students are productive citizens."

Harris said that it is imperative to teach youth how they can actively make their environment and society better through good and honest citizenship.

KagHS Q2 mid-progress night today

Attention parents and guardians of Kagman High School, we are highly encouraging all parents/guardians to please come to our 2nd quarter mid- progress night at the Kagman Elementary School cafeteria today from 3:30pm to 5:30pm.

Should you have any questions and/or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at 237-3840/3834. You may also email us at khsayuyu@kagmanhigh.org. ***(PR)***

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Foremost Scoops supports CNMI Toy Drive, gives ice cream coupons to gift givers

Foremost Scoops supports the campaign to spread holiday cheer to children in need by being a CNMI Toy Drive drop-off point. A new unwrapped toy for infants to teens from 0 to 18 years of age may be deposited in the toy box located inside Foremost Scoops.

In appreciation of the generosity of gift givers in the community, Foremost Scoops will give an ice cream coupon to every donor who drops off a gift at Foremost Scoops.

Foremost Scoops will accept gifts until Saturday, Dec. 20. All toys will be turned over to Karidat Social Services to share with children in need this holiday season. ***(PR)***

KagHS cautions against fundraising scam

Kagman High School wants to inform the community of a fraudulent fundraising ploy that was discovered yesterday afternoon.

We were informed that someone in the Saipan community is fraudulently selling tickets on behalf of the KHS 2015 senior class for a Luau Dinner at Fiesta Resort on Dec. 18 2014.

KHS senior class is not involved in this fraud and wants to warn the public. If anyone has been approached to buy or has purchased this fraudulent ticket scam, please contact the police authorities and report it right away. ***(PR)***

USP4GG sets Appreciation Night this Friday

The US Pinoys for Good Governance Marianas chapter will hold its Appreciation Night this Friday, Dec. 19, 2014, from 6:30pm to 10:30pm, at the San Antonio Parish Social Hall in San Antonio, Saipan.

The event will recognize the contributions, help, assistance, support, and services of US-P4GG members, volunteers, donors, and supporters.

There will be an awarding of Certificates of Appreciation, songs, parlor games, dinner and exchange gifts. To those who would like to join the exchange gifts, the price range of the gift is from $5 to $10.

The theme of the Appreciation Night is "Unity during this Christmas Season and Beyond." Reverend Father Rey Rosal, parish priest of San Jose Church, will deliver the Inspirational Message.

Atty. Loida Nicolas Lewis, national chairperson of the US Pinoys for Good Governance, will deliver her message live via Skype from New York City at 10pm, 7am New York time. ***(USP4GG)***

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

December 18, 2011

Bill seeks to require cars hauling trailers to have red taillights

A House of Representatives committee is recommending passage of a bill requiring vehicles hauling trailers or similar cargo to have red taillights for road safety. Under the bill, the red rear lights connected to the trailers should be in sequence to the tail light of the operating vehicle to help prevent accidents, especially in the early mornings and evening hours. The House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations chaired by Rep. Ralph Demapan (Cov-Saipan) recommends passage of Rep. Ray Tebuteb's (R-Saipan) House Bill 17-132. The House is expected to adopt the committee report in today's session. The panel said the CNMI Vehicle Code Act needs to be amended in order to protect the safety of vehicle operators, bikers, and pedestrians.

Two allegedly beat up man outside Garapan bar

Two drunk men allegedly beat up another man and threw rocks at his vehicle outside a bar in Garapan in the early morning hours of Dec. 1. Kevin I. Esteves, 21, and Bradley DLR. Palacios, 20, were arrested shortly after the incident. They were booked and detained at the Department of Corrections and were later released. Police officers said the victim, John Hamilton, sustained a swollen and bruised right eye and lip. The driver side window of Hamilton's Nissan pickup truck was damaged. Three to five rocks, each about the size of a baseball, were found on the floor and passenger seat of the truck. Police served Esteves with an arrest warrant on Thursday night in Garapan on charges of assault, assault and battery, criminal mischief, disturbing the peace, and minor consuming alcohol. Hi bail was set at $500 cash. If he fails to post bail, preliminary hearing will be on Dec. 28 at 9am.

December 18, 2002

House endorses $19-M loan bill

The initiative proposing to authorize the $19-million loan for rebate/refund payments finally made it past the lower House last night, following a session that was long stalled for a number of reasons. But House members threw their support to an entirely new proposal—House Bill 13-240—which had several departures from the original version that was drafted by the administration. HB 13-240, authored by Speaker Heinz S. Hofschneider, proposes, among others, to stretch the loan payment schedule from four to ten years, thereby decreasing the burden on the part of the government in repaying the debt.

CUC execs spent $20K for dining

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp., particularly the offices of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director, spent nearly $20,000 for lunch, dinner, and snacks out of their official representation allowance from October 2001 to the present. CUC officials were quick to point out, though, that this amount is reasonable and is still within control, considering that this represents more than one whole fiscal year. CUC records showed that in Fiscal Year 2002, the CUC executive director's office, headed then by Timothy P. Villagomez and later by Bernard P. Villagomez, spent over $11,000, while the Board used up over $4,500.

December 18, 2007

Man allegedly shoots brother-in-law's house

Police arrested a man after he allegedly shouted profanities at his wife in front of their children and repeatedly fired a pellet gun at the house of his brother-in-law in San Vicente Monday midnight. Glenn Saburo, 34, was detained for criminal mischief and disturbing the peace. At yesterday's hearing, Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman imposed a $100 cash bail and $800 unsecured bond for Saburo's temporary liberty. Saburo, his wife, and their five minor children had just returned from a party shortly before midnight Sunday when the incident happened, according to detective Andrea C. Ozawa in her report.

3 senators vow to block gaming bill

Proponents of the Saipan gaming bill may well consider it dead, as three senators vow to oppose the bill even before the bill makes it to the Senate floor. The Saipan gaming proposal is expected to be the main topic of discussion at the Senate session this morning. The House-approved bill needs at least seven votes to pass the Senate and be on its way to the governor. But with at least three of the nine senators voicing their opposition, passage of the bill seems unlikely. "My position against that bill has not changed," said Senate President Joseph Mendiola. "I oppose it for its defects. And I don't think I, as a lawmaker from Tinian, have the authority to enact something that has already been rejected by the people of Saipan."

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 14-050

Opening Date: December 10, 2014
Closing Date: December 23, 2014

Public Information & Community Relations Officer

Duties: Under the direct supervision of the Executive Director or designee. Serves as a liaison between CUC, the media and the public; plans, coordinates and disseminates public information utilizing various forms of communication in an effort to educate and promote the organization's projects and activities. Prepares copy for news releases; content for the CUC website; articles; newsletters; reports and creates various collateral materials. Develops and coordinates public outreach programs; researches and identifies outreach needs and recommends communication methods for the provision of information. Receives and responds to inquiries from the public, internal departments, and other agencies; may serve as representative at public meetings to address questions or issues, and to provide community updates. Designs and implements public information campaigns, events and programs; determines campaign or program goals and expected outcomes; plans, coordinates and prepares materials and activities to meet goals and objectives. Researches, gathers and maintains information and communication materials and archives. Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

LOCATION: Executive Director's Office, **Saipan,** Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
SALARY: $42,411.00 per annum to $57,255.00 per annum.
CONTRACT: Not Contracted.
POSITION(S): One (1)

Minimum Requirements: Bachelor's degree in Journalism, Public Administration or related field and 4 years of related public information experience. Proficiency in multiple languages is a plus. Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Public relations principles and techniques; Communication methods; Media relations principles; Customer relations principles; Modern office technology. Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Serving as a public information liaison and representative to the community; Planning, coordinating and disseminating public information; Determining information needs and promoting and educating the public; Preparing news releases, communications content, articles and collateral materials; Listening and responding to inquiries and effectively conveying information; Utilizing critical thinking and social perception to identify issues; Researching and preparing recommendations and responses; Designing and implementing programs and events; Measuring effectiveness of program delivery for future enhancements; Gathering and maintaining communication materials and information; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Subject to pre-employment drug test.

Drop off your CUC Employment Application at the CUC Human Resource Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan. Otherwise, you may drop it off at the Tinian and Rota Administration Office.

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Northern Mariana Islands Council for the Humanities

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Board of Directors
Northern Marianas Humanities Council

The Council is a non-profit private corporation affiliated with the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Council's mission is to "foster awareness, understanding and appreciation of the humanities through support of educational programs that relate the humanities to the indigenous cultures and to the intellectual needs and interests of the people of the Commonwealth."

The Council's board is comprised of thirteen volunteer members who serve three year terms. The Council strives to maintain a board that reflects a broad cross section of our CNMI community. The ideal candidate will have a strong desire to promote the Council's mission, programs, and activities and to actively participate in fundraising activities. Board responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Attending regular Council meetings four times annually;
- Raising funds for Council programs;
- Recruiting community partners;
- Promoting awareness about the Council's mission and its programs in the community;
- Attending Council programs and activities;
- Participating in working committee meetings;
- Evaluating Council programs and activities;
- Reviewing grant applications;
- Providing input about the humanities from various community members, and
- Attending conferences, workshops and other meetings on behalf of the Council.

Applicants are invited to submit their letters of interest and resumes to Robert H. Hunter, Chair, Northern Marianas Humanities Council at Post Office Box 506437 Saipan, MP 96950 or delivered to the Council's office located in the Springs Plaza Building in Gualo Rai, Saipan. All letters of interest and resumes must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, January 2, 2015. For additional information, please contact the Council's Executive Director, Scott Russell, at telephone 235-4785 or visit the Council's website at www.northernmarianashumanities.org.

Christmas Parade, Health Walk on Dec. 20

Catch the holiday spirit at this Saturday's Christmas Health Walk and Christmas Parade in Garapan, all part of the ongoing 13th Annual Christmas in the Marianas celebration in the Northern Marianas.

Festivities kick off with a 5K Christmas Health Walk, starting at Paseo de Marianas and traversing south along the Saipan Beach Pathway to Gold Beach Hotel. Registration begins at 4:30pm., participation is free, and registrants will receive a free T-shirt while supplies last.

The event is led by Marianas Walking Association. Santa Claus is also scheduled to take a break from his pre-Christmas preparations to join the event.

The revelry will continue with the Christmas Parade at 6pm from Garapan Fishing Base north along Beach Road to American Memorial Park intersection, then left to Coral Tree Ave., where floats will remain on display after the parade for picture taking.

Participating schools will be: Koblerville, Kagman, and Northern Marianas International at the elementary school level; Tanapag, Northern Marianas International, San Antonio, and Cha Cha Oceanview at the middle school level; and Saipan Southern and Kagman at the high school level. Other floats will include: Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Management, Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, Stellar Marianas and Miss Marianas Teen Giana Camacho, Saipan Mayor's Office, and Matua Riders.

A Christmas Costume show will also be held featuring the best costumes from local schools on the catwalk at Paseo de Marianas. Food and vendor sales, including local artwork and crafts, will continue throughout the event until 9pm.

"The enthusiastic participation of our local schools is really what makes Christmas in the Marianas such a success each year," Marianas Visitors Authority Community Projects manager Martin Duenas. "If you want to catch the holiday spirit, we invite you to join us for a festive time at Paseo de Marianas on Saturday evening."

The annual Christmas in the Marianas celebration is sponsored by the MVA, Team PDI, PDM Promoters, Inc., and other travel partners. Dec. 27, a traditional Japanese Mochitsuki Festival will be held and the winner of the Christmas Tree Decorating Competition, Christmas Caroling Competition, and Float Competition will be announced. Christmas trees are illuminated each evening throughout the rest of December at Paseo de Marianas for the enjoyment of visitors and residents. Christmas in the Marianas sponsors and supporters also include: T Galleria, Tan Siu Lin Foundation, DOCOMO Pacific, Kinpachi Restaurant, CNMI Public School System, Japan Saipan Travel Association, Country House Restaurant, RNV Construction, MISA Ent., Power 99, Moby Dick Restaurant, KKMP, Magic 100FM, KCNM, Teach PDI, Chamolinian Cultural Village, and Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture. ***(MVA)***

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy 11th birthday KC! May all your wishes and dreams come true. We love you! Greetings from your family.

CUC schedules 9-hour water outage in four areas

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the residents of Papago, San Vicente, and residents living in the Stanford area and along Dandan Road that a nine-hour water outage is scheduled for Friday, Dec. 19, from 8am to 5pm.

The purpose of this water outage is to allow CUC's contractor, ASC Construction, to install a new pressure-sustaining valve (PSV) at the San Vicente Reservoir. This new PSV will control water flow into the San Vicente reservoir and regulate water pressure in the Stanford area. This work is part of the Construction of 300K Gallon Tank Replacement for Papago Tank Project funded by the USA-EPA.

CUC's operations team and ASC Construction will be working hard to return service to our customers in these affected areas as soon as possible. CUC recommends that customers take extra conservation measures so that returning service will occur quickly upon completion of construction.

CUC apologizes in advance for any inconvenience resulting from this project and the water service interruption. Please direct inquiries to James Benavente, Project Manager at (670) 664-4282, ext. 337. ***(CUC)***

Island Food offices reopen after CCAD renovation

The opening of the newly renovated Island Food Community of Pohnpei (IFCP) office in Kolonia was commemorated with an official ribbon cutting ceremony. U.S. Navy Seabees from the Community Civic Construction Action Detail (CCAD) program replaced the roof, windows, doors, wiring, plumbing, and windows, and then painted the building. The job was completed on time, and the IFCP has moved back into their office.

Ambassador Rosen presented certificates of appreciation to the Seabees and to the local construction workers who worked side by side with the Seabees on the IFCP project. Commodore Meyer came from Port Hueneme, CA with Command Master Chief Teart to congratulate the Seabee detachment working on Pohnpei on a job well done.

The Seabees also completed minor renovations at the Sokehs Dispensary. Next week they will begin repair work at the Pohnlongas Dispensary.

The Seabees will work through the Holidays to complete the construction of a new changing room at the Pohnpei Swim Pool. Additionally, they are replacing the roof on the 2nd and 3rd grade building at Kolonia Elementary School.

CCAD projects are funded entirely by the U.S. Department of Defense. This program does not use Compact funding. This CCAD project is scheduled to be completed with the departure of the Detail during the second week of January. ***(PR)***

PH consulate sets holiday sked

The Philippine Consulate General in Guam wishes to inform the public that its office will be closed on the following dates in December 2014 and January 2015:

- Dec. 24, 2014, Wednesday—Special non-working day
- Dec. 25, 2014, Thursday—Christmas Day (Regular Holiday)
- Dec. 26, 2014, Friday—Special non-working day
- Dec. 30, 2014, Tuesday—Rizal Day (Regular Holiday)
- Dec. 31, 2014, Wednesday—Special non-working day
- Jan. 1, 2015, Thursday—New Year's Day (Regular Holiday)
- Jan. 2, 2015, Friday—Special non-working day

For emergency consular matters, a duty officer can be contacted at mobile no. (671)488-4630. ***(PR)***

NEWBORN
HEARING
SCREENING
PROGRAM
Babies learn from the time they are born. One of the ways they learn is through hearing. When a baby is born with hearing loss, many sounds and voices are not heard, and the child's speech and language development can be delayed. CHCC implemented newborn hearing as a standard of care and all babies get their hearing screened shortly after birth.
Ask if your baby passed the test. If you have concerns or your baby needs follow up call 236-8709.
Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation
Printing funded by the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Grant under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Service Administration.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Another Malala moment for Pakistan

Two years ago, a Taliban gunman boarded a school bus in Pakistan and fired a shot that outraged the world. He seriously wounded 14-year-old Malala Yousafzai. She recovered, became a powerful voice in the fight against Taliban extremism, and won the Nobel Peace Prize this year.

On Tuesday, another Malala moment staggered Pakistan … and the world.

Taliban gunmen stormed a military school in Peshawar and slaughtered more than 140 people, mostly children. This was no random school. These students were children of Pakistan Army officers and soldiers, who are leading a campaign to crush the Taliban in their tribal badlands.

The Taliban gunmen slipped through a back gate and opened fire on children in classrooms and hallways. The terrorists bolted from room to room, shooting children at will. Some students tried to hide under their desks. They were killed where they hid. Other students died when the terrorists lobbed hand grenades or detonated suicide vests.

The jihadists showed no mercy: Most of the children were shot in the head.

Taliban leaders claimed the attack was revenge for Pakistan Army incursions into their tribal areas and for U.S. drone strikes against their leaders.

"We selected the army's school for the attack because the government is targeting our families and females," a Taliban spokesman said. "We want them to feel the pain."

This massacre of innocent children repulses Pakistan … and the world. Now, how will Pakistan respond?

Islamabad knows what doesn't work. For years, Pakistan's leaders negotiated truce after truce with the Taliban. These leaders tried to appease the terrorists by surrendering the Swat valley on the Afghanistan border. Each time, the Taliban seized the opportunity to re-arm, regroup and threaten major Pakistan cities.

In recent months, however, Pakistan has shown renewed resolve to root out the terrorists. This fall, a Pakistan army onslaught and a series of U.S. drone strikes forced a Taliban retreat. Pakistan's commanders vowed they would root out the terrorists and prevail. The horrific scale of the Taliban's response reflects how powerful the military's campaign has been.

In the aftermath of the Peshawar attack Tuesday, Pakistan launched more air strikes.

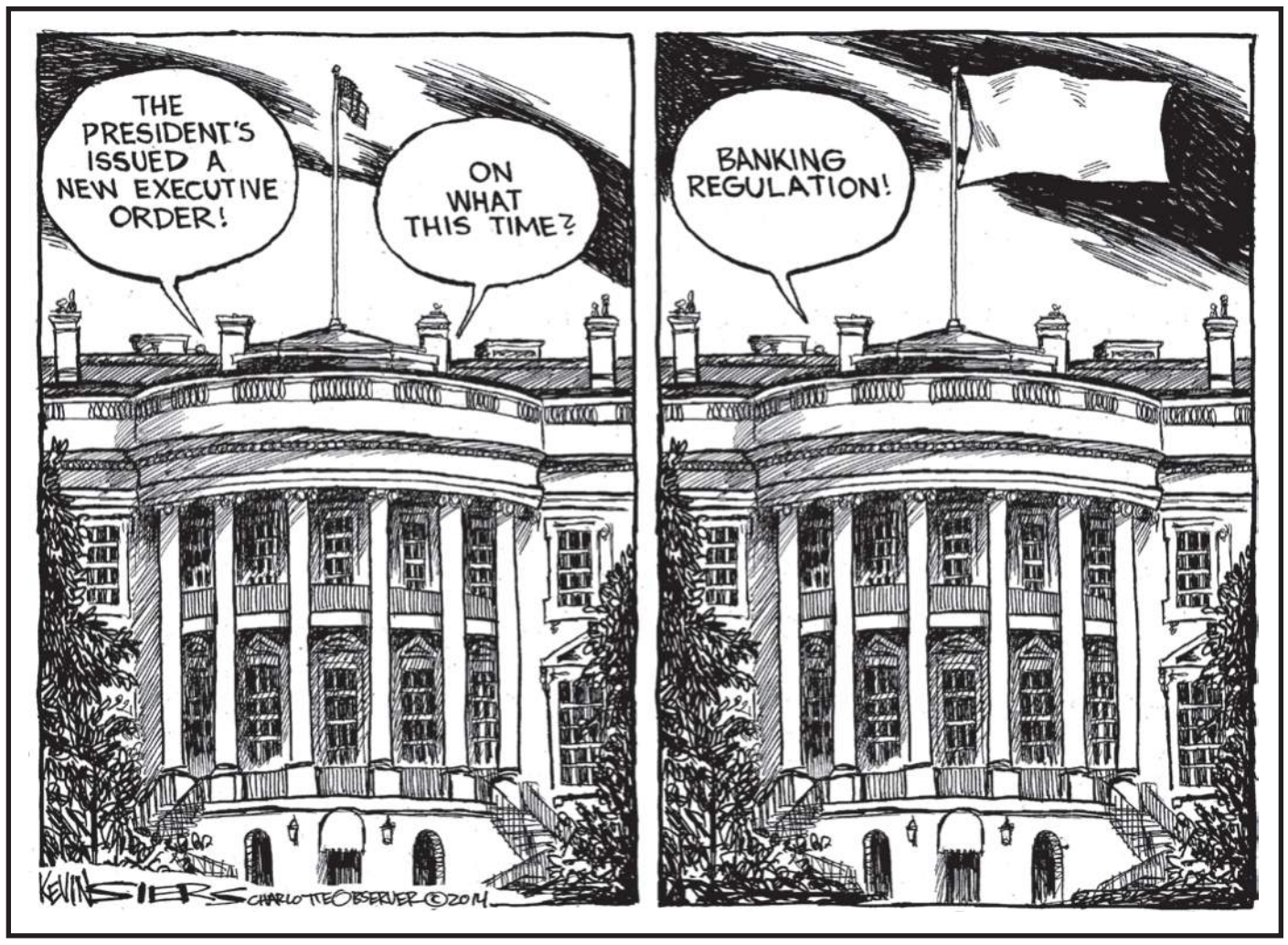
"This is a decisive moment in the fight against terrorism," Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif told reporters. "The people of Pakistan should unite in this fight. Our resolve will not be weakened by these attacks."

Yet even with small bodies piling up in the Peshawar morgue, a forceful Pakistan response is not a foregone conclusion.

The country has been a shaky ally for the U.S. and a dangerous neighbor for Afghanistan. Some people in Pakistan's government and intelligence services play both sides of the conflict, secretly funneling aid to homegrown terrorists while pretending to help the U.S. and its allies.

Pakistan's leaders have often been hesitant to take on the Taliban. Over the years, some Pakistan leaders have complained about U.S. drone strikes on Taliban leaders. They've claimed that such strikes sabotaged peace talks with the Taliban.

See MALALA on Next Page



Lifting the US ban on oil exports would send OPEC a message

By CHRIS FAULKNER
Los Angeles Times

Chris Faulkner is chief executive of Breitling Energy Corp., author of "The Fracking Truth: America's Energy Revolution: The Inside, Untold Story," producer of the documentary "Breaking Free: The Shale Rock Revolution" and host of the nationally syndicated radio program "Powering America."

Crude oil prices are down 40 percent in recent months. There's a surplus of 2 million barrels being pumped each day. Estimates are that demand for oil will fall in 2015.

And yet in the face of all this, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, or OPEC, is holding its oil production steady. So far, the 12 OPEC countries appear willing to absorb huge losses in the hope that plummeting prices will make U.S. shale oil extraction unprofitable. If it can squeeze out some U.S. producers, OPEC hopes to regain its dominance and force the United States back into foreign oil dependence.

The United States has an effective potential countermove: Congress should lift the 40-year ban on exporting crude oil and keep U.S. producers in the game.

OPEC has good reason to feel threatened. The U.S oil business is experiencing an unprecedented production boom thanks to hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. According to the Energy Information Administration, U.S. oil production has risen to 9.08 million barrels a day — its highest level in more than 30 years.

The United States has already overtaken Saudi Arabia, OPEC's dominant member, as the world's largest producer of petroleum liquids — which includes natural gas — according to the International Energy Agency. In the last three years, oil and gas production has grown faster here than in any other country in history. This energy boom has revitalized America's economy, supporting more than 2 million jobs and contributing $283 billion to U.S. gross domestic product.

OPEC's decision to send oil prices tumbling was designed to reverse these gains. As Saudi Oil Minister Ali Ibrahim Naimi said after OPEC met in November, the international cartel "provided an answer" to the U.S. shale industry.

Lower oil prices have certainly affected American shale producers.

Fracking is more expensive than conventional oil drilling. Consequently, as oil prices fall, producers will be forced to scale back. In the Bakken formation in North Dakota, some producers need a price of at least $65 a barrel to break even. Other producers in Texas and Oklahoma have been losing money since oil dropped below $75. On Monday U.S. oil prices were $55.91, the lowest price since mid-2009.

Big energy companies are already trimming costs. ConocoPhillips recently announced plans to slash investment spending by 20 percent next year. Halliburton, the world's second-largest oil field services company, just announced layoffs.

But OPEC may be underestimating the tenacity of American producers.

The IEA has concluded that most shale oil from the Bakken formation is profitable at just $42 a barrel. A recent study from IHS, a consulting firm, concluded that 80 percent of American shale oil can be profitable between $50 and $69 per barrel. Plus, as producers continue to innovate, extraction costs will drop.

Let's not forget that OPEC is vulnerable to its own policy. Although the International Monetary Fund found that Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates can balance their budgets with oil at about $70 a barrel, the same cannot be said for the nine other members of OPEC. Venezuela and Nigeria need $120 to get by, while Iran needs $136 — more than twice Monday's price.

Indeed, once one considers rising production and decreasing demand across the globe, OPEC's move looks suicidal. Bank of America called the cartel "effectively dissolved."

As oil prices continue to slide, the question is who will fold first: OPEC or the U.S. shale industry? That could depend on Congress.

In 1975, Congress banned the export of U.S. crude oil in response to the Arab oil embargo. With oil prices skyrocketing, Congress sought to protect America from price shocks by keeping oil at home. Today, that restriction doesn't make sense. There's no longer a shortage of oil.

The ability to export American crude oil across the world would ensure that U.S. shale producers can afford to stay in the oil game. Even if the margins are low, revenue from new international markets would allow them to keep drilling and compete for a share of the world market.

Exports wouldn't hurt American consumers. A recent analysis by the EIA found that domestic gas prices are directly tied to international crude prices. So exports would not raise prices at home.

OPEC thinks it can squash America's shale oil industry. With the right export policies, however, the United States can win this price war and solidify its place as an exporter, not just importer, in the global oil market.

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Whopped and BK'd

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara previously taught at SVES in the CNMI. A peripatetic pedagogue, he last taught in China but makes Honolulu, Shenyang, and Saipan home. He can be reached at pinoypanda2031@aol.com.

I do not think they are called «Boko Karam»; its abbreviation would fit our title. We imagine those in the borders of Nigeria and Cameroon wreaking havoc to political structures on both countries, the ones who abducted 276 schoolgirls from northeast Nigeria›s Chibok. The girls› future has already been directed elsewhere other than a return to the classroom.

They are called *Boko Haram,* translated "Western Education is forbidden", a militant Islamic Jihadist movement accused by the US in 2013 as a terrorist organization, officially called *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad,* (People Committed to the Prophet's Teachings for Propagation and Jihad).

I live in a University town where Aerospace, Medical, Engineering, and Normal School have all relocated from downtown Shenyang, and have a high percentage of students from Africa. I once kidded a girl if Boko Haram was named after the *Burka* (the first a headgear and the last an attire that hides everything including the eyes that looks only through a mesh) and the *Hajib*, but she did not think that was funny. She was Hausa from Kano, Nigeria where once I landed when my London-Lagos (Yuruba land) flight sheltered because a Taureg sandstorm threatened. That was also where I saw more burkas in one place and where Hausa and Boko Haram prevails!

The *Hajib* is rather common in the department stores and subway stops near my dwelling as many students are proud of their cultural heritage, resist the wind force and dust on the hair, and provide comfort from the cold, but I look at them more from the fashion perspective rather than their Sharia meaning. Having lived in Kentucky, Virginia, Texas, and North Carolina, where the Ku Klux Klan wore the *caparitos* that Nazareno priests processed with during *España's* Holy Week quickly made me separate symbol from their significance.

But I was BK'd this week. That is not an acronym familiar to pugilists whose KO and TKO is more the familiar lingo. My friends keep forwarding me news blips of boxer-turned-Philippine legislator Manny Pacquiao, especially after he won his last two Macau bouts.

At 36, Pacquiao needs to climb the ring with perennial verbal foe Floyd Mayweather who at 38 guards an undefeated record. Of course, their bout has been five years in the making, but the current betting is that one will be held within six months, now that Dallas Cowboys' owner is bidding to hold the event at his 100K seat stadium in Texas with a minimum take at $50 million to each fighter.

Still on boxing, we just learned that Mickey Rourke at 62, after his last professional bout in 1994, KO'd his 29-yr old opponent (who allegedly took a dive) in Moscow to improve a career record of 7-0-2. I last noticed Mickey, Academy Award nominee, in *Wild Orchid* filmed in the Copacabana of Brazil (where I spent a month outside of Rio Bonito). He was with Jacqueline Bisset, pleasantly tart and playful in the movie, with French Elite super model Carré Otis who was rumored to have had a real sex scene with Rourke. They were later married and divorced ('92-'98).

Otis wrote in her memoirs three years ago how her modeling agency boss raped her at 17, adding her to the recent Joan Collins revelation, noticeable now that Bill Cosby got the accusatory finger on his questionable bed manners. Shia LeBeaouf claims to have been raped by a fan while his girlfriend waited in line outside a set-up one-on-one encounter with fans. Lucky guy!

Boy, and I was just going to follow-up my article on *Suba, Kimchi and BK,* but I took a round about way to get here, from Nigeria to Macau, Brazil to Hollywood. It must be the cold!

Yup, I got whopped at BK (for the uninitiated, that is Burger King, the home of the Whopper). The fast food service corner finally opened, a suggested venue to meet acquaintances that I avoid. I walked in the cold the other day, so I ran for warmth at BK. I looked at the pictures, recalling that BK had Alaskan fish and Persian Gulf fish served in Kuwait (pork was verboten - the Yumbo sandwich unheard of - while beef, sheep and goat meat were imported) but no fins were in the grills in Shenyang.

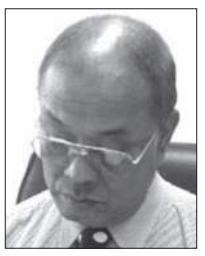
Da du zi (big tummy) growled and we knee-jerked. The Whopper meal cost 35 rmb, thirty-five rides on the bus for me before the rates go double in three more months. The bun pictures on the wall were bigger and firmer than what came in my plate. It did not surprise me but the beef on the wimpy sandwich bun tasted like mush dried on the grill. That, or I had forgotten what beef tasted like. There was no refill on the soda. The redeeming virtue of the place was a waitress who spoke English. Graced with Africans and Caucasians who spoke halting Chinese among its customers, her English came in handy.

So I was royally whopped at BK, and lighter on the pocket, too, as my oral englisCHe learners come motivated and earnest but hardly paying customers, so I shall avoid getting into the BK arena again, or add more warmth against the cold. B-r-r-r.

Congratulations Pale James

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.*



Gi mapos na semana ma-otdena pale si James Salas Balajada, un` hoben ni umayeg humidde na bokasion para u fan ayuda gi ma-adelantan linala` famaguonta siha espirituat segun i tinagu` i Saina.

Este i espirituat na patte gi linala`ta sumen presisu gi inestablesen ineyag dichu che`chu` tautau ni sumetbe kumu pisu gi sibilisau, pas yan trañkilu na kinalamten komunida. Estague` na añkla i mas presisu gi finapos kada unu.

Gigon un` pega añklamu papa`, ni kuantu na napu yan chubasku un` finatoigue siempre i botimu u kilulog ya u gini`ot ni puntan tali pot no u lailai yan mafondu gi halom lañgat gi taduñg na tasi.

Ha pañgun tatte esperansiaghu disision este na patgon layeye pot gineftauña man-ayuda gi otru. Estague` na pisu i Sainata `nai tumachu ya hana` fan manhassu hit na muñga ma-tailayiye i namase` ya unna` geftau hau gi nesessidat i timuna` siña.

Dañkulu lokue` na bendision para i dos saina pot ma-entrega lahen niha gi Saina para u petsige mamana`gue haf` siha tinago`ña deste antes gi tiempun Yuus Tata.

Anaku` kareraña si Pale James ya manlistu ham umayuda hau gi nuebu na bokasionmu. Bien felis Pale James gi ma-otdenamu pale`. Motmut bendision yan tinayuyot ginen hame! Congratulations!

Che`chu` tailaye

Mafattu mina`ase`hu gi un` lahi-hu ni todus numesessita pot batidan eleksion mas ke dies años malofan. Esta man-bebela gi fihon katren tataña gi hospitat `nai umagoninias.

`Nai gai chinatsaga yan lai, ensegidas masoyu` para u resignague` pot no u fan kahaga`. Ma-abandona i prohimu yan makat kilu`osña.

Mañgge sensian kilisyanu yan ma`ug na amesta gi este na sinisede? Kulan un` abandona gi taduñg tasi `nai mafondu i bote pot no un` fan ayuda sa` pumalalapa ya kumeke matmos.

Anog na solu pot interes ayu na attension. Ti namatman i chumogue sa` hagas hayuña man-usa tautau kumu pot interesña.

I mahasñgon na sinisede siempre u biragueˋ tatte. I Saina sen man-apase ya u fattu tarehamu `nai un` diseseha dispues maseha dididi` konsuelu gi halom taduñg hoyun sasalaguan ni hagu mismu gumuadog.

Nobenan Familia

Buente pot megai familia dumiñgu i hagas soñgsuñg na kulan maliñgon ñaihon lokue` nobenan familia ni sessu ta tucha gi tiempon ha`anen gupot siha.

Tai malefaghu `an lumiliku` nobenan Niñi Perdido gi todu guma` bisinu. Mangaige lamayot patte deste patgon yan amku`.

Deste tinayuyot, kanta yan fina` sena gi finagpu mina` tres dias sumen antau na dinaña. Estague` tutuhon finanague yan adelantun linala` espirituat gi famaguon. Nina` fitme mas este `an mandottrina dispues de finagpu` eskuela.

Mas lokue` hana` fitme pogse` inafamauleg gi entalu` todus. Guaha ha` buente kumililiˋ nobenan familia para i nuebu na soñgsuñg. Mauleg `an makontinua gi hilu` pattisipasion bisinu. Mas fitme inafamauleg yan proteksion todu.

Amot Natibu

Hu li`e antes defunta biha-hu sige ha lomug pugua` mahetog gi halom dikiki` na achu` lusuñg (lomug). Dispues ha pega hagun tinanom siha ya sige ha lomug. Ha pega gi halom hanom ya ha kula. Hana`eyu` para bai gimen. Mala`et!

Hana hassuyu` inasoda` mediku siha ginen enteru elmundu. I kuestion: Haf` na mampos anaku` ha`aniña i Chinu ke otru rasan tautau. Na tautaugue puru amot ginen tinanom magigimen. Tatnai magimen amot pedulas taimanu i Amerikanu.

Dispues `nai ha diñgu ham si bihahu gi idat 84, sige hu arastreha haf` sessu sentadaña `an matachoñg chumochu. Diberas, sessu ha offisiona kafe, dididi` asukat yan hinegsa`. Taimanu na anaku` ha`aniña ti komprendiyon. Magahet na hagas makalamya na biha.

I hinemlo`ta kada unu kunsu kuat. Mauleg ta atetuye eksisiu yan metgot na inadahe gi haf` ta kakanu`. Sentada regulatmiente sin magulusune i paire! Finu` man-amku` todu inipus ti mauleg. Dispues, hagu i kapitan galaide` tatautau-mu.

Lastron Tata

Sige hu dibina finattun fañuchanan yan fañumnagan. Gi mismu sakudida sige ha` halom gi hinasoghu button amku` gi kantun tasi ni tinatitiye ni lahiña.

Maseha achagu` pasun tataña esta man-galolope pot para u ke hagu` mona anaku` pasun tataña. Dispues kinata`uma ya sige i dos tatte gi kareta.

Ayu na patgon u finanu`e as tataña manu ha hananague. U fattu gi china felis. U pinipet gi halom piligru ya nina eyag fitme na mocun satbasion para guiya mismu.

Pasensiaye famaguon gi haf` propiu para umatatiye. I felis na kareran patgon i guaguan yan sumen namagof na premiun saina. Na`e animu pot futtunan niha.

Niyog yan tuban mames

I kompanian amot (US Pharmaceutical) madestroai amanu siña usun niyog pot mantika. Dispues `nai masoda` na dañkulu benefisioña usun niyog gi tautau. Lau mahasñgon che`chu` tinailaye pot man-mamatitinas miyon pot miyon pesus na ganansia gi sakan ginen mabenden amot niha.

Pa`gu iya Filipinas mafabrika tuban mames gi hechuran pedulas asukat. Fahna mampos na produktu giya Japon espesiatmente gi halom man-daibetes. Sa hafa mohon? Mames na klasen asukat ni tai asukat! Guaha besis na debi hita mismu ta estudiaye haf` mauleg para hita mismu piot gi bandan hinemlu`.

Lokue, guaha un` Samoan giya Houston, Texas, inadite prohimu daibites. `Nai tantu mafogsiye amot hospitat hana para. Humanau man-gagau fafalun choda. Ha sotne pot kuattru oras ya ha gimen. `Nai mariseta dispues maliñgu i daibites. Mafaisen ni medikuña haf` bidaña lau sen tiha sañgane. Finu` i prohimu tat tiniñgu` niha i para umachule`guan i natibu ni amotña pot para u fan mama` kepble.

Hagas i natibu hanasetbi niyog gi sentadaña ya sumen brabu. Lau estague` saikilulog kompanian amot pot para ta fahan produktun niha. Siha man-mama` kepble hita mañgilulog pot manadan lache na espantu pot niyog. Haf` achamauleg alimienton kadun guihan ni maleche niyog pat cereal para i famaguonta?

Ñahlalañg

Sige amiguhu biudu ha deka` gitalaña mientras kumakanta. Dispues, hu li`e na mesgu mataña. Ha atrebigue` sumañgan na mahalañggue` ni defunta.

Hu faisen kau guiya ayu na palao`an i ha fababa `nai manliles as Konchita. Ai, hihot ha panagyu` ni gitalaña mientras ha usune chumaleg tuyan. Buente magahet ginacha` binalutan ni baban bidaña.

MALALA

From Page 10

But the Taliban don't want peace. They seek to overthrow Pakistan's government. They aim to lash out at the West, particularly the U.S. They seek a world that beheads unbelievers and forbids girls — like Malala — from attending school.

Pakistan mourns today. But it also gains strength from children such as Malala, who refused to be intimidated. Who demanded the right to go to school.

"I, along with millions of others around the world, mourn these children, my brothers and sisters," Malala said after the Tuesday attack. "But we will never be defeated."

Let this be Pakistan's last Malala moment.

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The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.
▲88° ▼77°

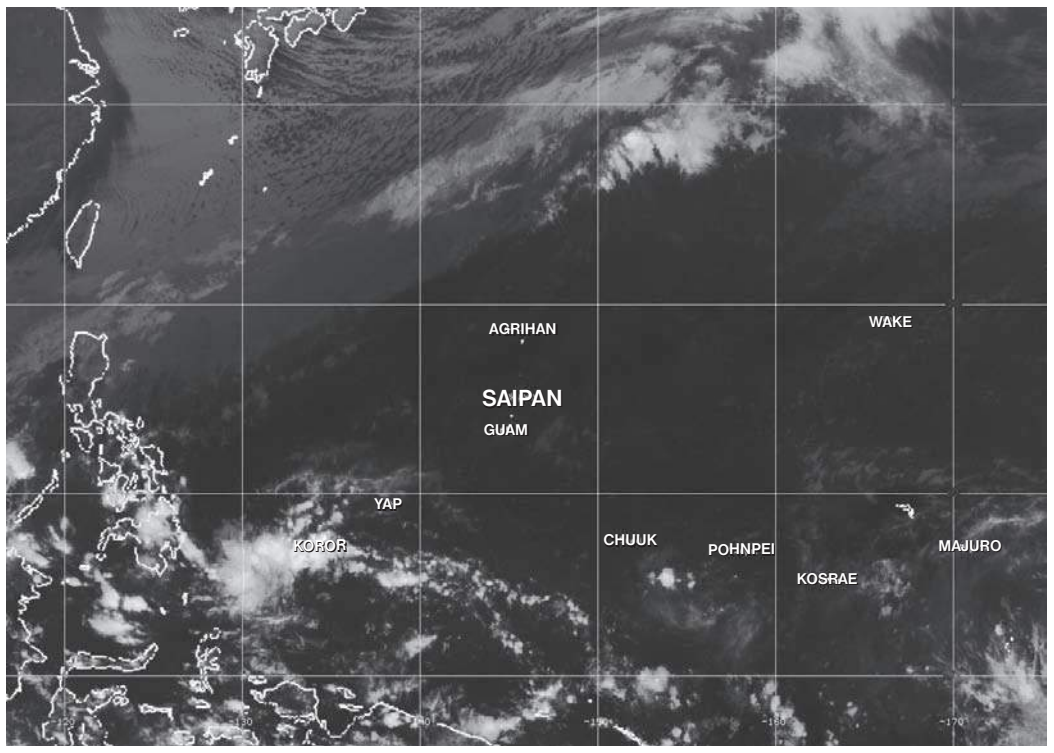
FRIDAY
Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.
▲88° ▼77°

SATURDAY
Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼77°

SUNDAY
Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼77°

MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼77°

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2014
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from near Iwo To Island near 25N144E to beyond 130E at 17N. Extensive cloudiness and scattered showers are found along and up to 400 miles northwest of the front. A shear line extends west-southwestward from northeast of Wake Island at 25N172E to 22N161E. Cloudiness and patchy rain exist along and up to 250 miles north of this feature. A surface trough curving northward from EQ133E to 9N135E is triggering scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms southwest of Koror between 4N and 7N from 131E to 135E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼80
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼80
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼79
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	▲85	▼79
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼79
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	▲85	▼80
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼80

Around the Globe

Auckland	Partly Cloudy	▲74	▼61
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	▲39	▼21
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	▲64	▼56
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	▲82	▼71
London	Showers	▲55	▼52
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲61	▼47
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	▲81	▼73
Melbourne	Thundershowers	▲74	▼53
Miami	Sunny	▲78	▼60
New York	Partly Cloudy	▲52	▼35
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲40	▼32
Paris	Rain	▲54	▼52
Pusan	Sunny	▲36	▼28
Rome	Mostly Sunny	▲59	▼45
Salem	Showers	▲46	▼41
San Francisco	Showers	▲58	▼51
Seoul	Sunny	▲27	▼17
Tokyo	Sunny	▲45	▼34
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	▲51	▼34

Tides

Saipan Harbor

5:20 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.5 Feet
10:19 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
4:11 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
11:32 PM	Today	High Tide:	0.0 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Friday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Saturday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Sunday	6:38 AM	5:52 PM
Monday	6:39 AM	5:52 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	2:41 AM	2:38 PM
Friday	3:34 AM	3:25 PM
Saturday	4:29 AM	4:16 AM
Sunday	5:27 AM	5:11 PM
Monday	6:25 AM	6:09 PM

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Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2014

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA5070	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA5068	8:00am	8:50am	3
UA5068	8:40am	9:30am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA5039	2:20pm	4:00pm	6, 7 via Rota
UA5078	3:10pm	4:00pm	1, 5
UA5038	3:10pm	4:00pm	2, 4
UA5040	6:55pm	7:45pm	1, 5
UA5078	8:35pm	9:25pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA5044	10:40pm	11:30pm	1, 5

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA5039	2:20pm	2:55pm	6, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA5039	3:25pm	4:00pm	6, 7

SAIPAN-PALAU (ROR)

DL287	6:05am	1:05am+1	2, 6 via NRT

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL287	6:05am	8:40am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
DL297	4:20pm	7:05pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ604	3:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
7C 3401	4:30pm	8:20pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764A	1:30am	5:30am	4, 7
MU764	1:30am	5:30am	1, 5

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:30am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ606/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5069/PR111	2:45am	4:50pm	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5070/191	4:15am	7:20am	2, 7 via GUM
UA5070/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA5070/183	4:15am	8:45pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA5070/183	4:15am	9:10pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
DL287/473	6:05am	9:50pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 6 via NRT
UA5071/PR111	6:40am	4:50pm	3 via GUM
UA5071/PR111	7:15am	4:50pm	1, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:00am	9:50pm	3 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5039/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	6, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	9:30pm	5 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	9:50pm	1 via GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	9:50pm	4 via GUM
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:50pm	Daily via ICN

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ606/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ606/723	2:10am	12:50pm	1 via ICN
OZ606/721	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/723	2:40am	12:50pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5070/179	4:15am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA5068/179	8:00am	10:35pm	3 via GUM
UA5068/179	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 5, 6 via GUM
UA5039/179	2:20pm	10:35pm	6 via Rota-GUM
UA5078/179	3:10pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via GUM
OZ604/749	3:20pm	10:30pm	Daily via ICN

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA5069	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA5071	6:40am	7:30am	3
UA5071	7:15am	8:05am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA5039	1:00pm	1:50pm	6, 7
UA5038	1:10pm	2:40pm	2, 4 via Rota
UA5077	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 5
UA5041	5:35pm	6:25pm	1, 5
UA5077	7:15pm	8:05pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA5043	9:20pm	10:10pm	1, 5

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA5038	1:10pm	1:45pm	2, 4

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA5038	2:05pm	2:40pm	2, 4

PALAU (ROR)-SAIPAN

DL298	4:30am	3:00pm	3, 7 via NRT

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL288	8:55pm	1:25am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
7C 3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ605	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:30pm	5:50am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763A	4:30pm	12:30am+1	3, 6
MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	4, 7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:55pm	3:10am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA5041	7:35am	6:25pm	1,5 via GUM
PR110/UA5077	7:35am	8:05pm	3, 6, 7 via GUM
PR110/UA5043	7:35am	10:10pm	1, 5 via GUM
DL172/288	9:40am	1:25am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7 via NRT
UA190/5077	9:55am	8:05pm	2, 7 via GUM
UA190/5077	10:00am	8:05pm	3, 6 via GUM
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA184/5071	10:55pm	7:30am+1	3 via GUM
UA184/5071	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5039	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5038	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	4 via GUM-Rota
UA184/5077	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5041	10:55pm	6:25pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5077	10:55pm	8:05pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5043	10:55pm	10:10pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5071	10:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/5038	10:59pm	2:40pm+1	2 via GUM-Rota
UA184/5077	10:59pm	2:40pm+1	5 via GUM
UA184/5041	10:59pm	6:25pm+1	5 via GUM
UA184/5077	10:59pm	8:05pm+1	2 via GUM
UA184/5043	10:59pm	10:10pm+1	5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ746/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ750/603	1:10am	2:20pm	Daiily via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ724/605	2:20pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/605	2:20pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA180/5071	10:55pm	7:30am+1	3 via GUM
UA180/5071	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 5, 6 via GUM
UA180/5039	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	6 via GUM
UA180/5077	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA180/5041	10:55pm	6:25pm+1	1, 5 via GUM
UA180/5077	10:55pm	8:05pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA180/5043	10:55pm	10:10pm+1	1, 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Mon, Tue,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

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SOFA BED
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HOT DEAL!
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HERCULES PORTABLE 2 BURNER GLASS TOP PROPANE GAS STOVE $55.95

BETTER CHEF 18PC GLASSWARE SET $13.95

COLEMAN 9QT EXCURSION COOLER $14.95

KUNG FU MASTER 20PC SS FLATEWARE SET $23.95

NUTRI BULLET SUPER FOOD NUTRITION EXTRACTOR $129.95

HONG MA COCKTAIL TABLE $29.95

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KENMORE 1.6CUFT REF $139.95

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ADEL TUMBLER 4PC 14OZ $1.95

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JACLYN SMITH GATSBY 4 DRAWER DRESSER $179.95

BEGINNINGS BY SAUDER SIDE TABLE $24.95

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Judiciary to conduct 6th Law and the Freshman Legislator seminar

The Commonwealth Judiciary will conduct the sixth Law and the Freshman Legislator seminar, a biennial seminar specifically designed for incoming legislators on Jan. 8, 2015.

The half-day program includes a condensed course on the Covenant and Constitution, an overview of the judiciary process, and an opportunity for interactive dialogue between first-time representatives and members of the Judiciary.

All nine newly elected legislators—seven representatives and two senators—have been invited to this year's event. Since the program's inception in 2004, 53 legislators have participated in the program and all have highly recommended that the program continue. Former participants point to its constructive, informative, and highly beneficial nature.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Representatives-elect Antonio R. Agulto, Anthony T. Benavente, Roman C. Benavente, Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero, Christopher D. Leon Guerrero, John Paul P. Sablan, Mariano Taitano, and Ralph N. Yumul listen to speaker in the 2013 Law and the Freshmen Legislator program.

The seminar agenda consists of four sessions covering: (1) the Covenant, the United States Constitution, and the NMI Constitution; (2) the role of the Courts; (3) statutory interpretation; and (4) the basics of legal research. Presenting will be Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro, Justice John A. Manglona, Justice Perry B. Inos, Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona of the U.S. District Court for the NMI, Judge David A. Wiseman, Judge Kenneth L. Govendo, Judge Joseph N. Camacho, Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio, and Executive Director of the Commonwealth Law Revision Commission Michael A. Stanker.

The Northern Mariana Islands Historic Society will sponsor a roundtable discussion and luncheon to be held after the formal presentations that will provide the new legislators with the opportunity to interact in a question and answer dialogue with the justices and judges.

For more information call 236-9805. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Incoming legislators in 2013 listen to Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro as he opened the fifth biennial Law and the Freshmen Legislator program with a discussion on the Covenant and the U.S. and CNMI Constitutions.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Judge Kenneth L. Govendo and Judge David A. Wiseman along with Justice John A. Manglona (not shown) discuss the role of the courts.

US Coast Guard to enforce Kailua Bay security zones

HONOLULU—U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement officers will enforce a temporary security zone in waters off Kailua Bay, Oahu, Hawaii. The temporary security zone is necessary to ensure the safety of the President of the United States.

The security zone will be in effect from 6 a.m. Thursday to 10 p.m. Jan. 5 unless canceled earlier by Captain Shannon Gilreath, U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port.

The Coast Guard is coordinating with the Honolulu Police Department, Marine Corps Base Hawaii and other federal, state, and county law enforcement agencies on patrols of the area under the direction of the Secret Service.

The maritime security zone includes a portion of Kailua Bay, beginning at Kapoho Point and extending westward to the shoreline near Kailuana Loop. The zone also includes the adjacent canal beginning near Kapoho Point to a point extending the canal way to approximately 150 yards south of the North Kalaheo Avenue Road Bridge.

A marker will be placed on Kailua Beach, a yellow buoy will be placed on the water and an orange marker will be placed in the canal for visual references of the zone.

Under the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (33 CFR 165.33), the temporary law prohibits any unauthorized person or vessel from entering or remaining in this security zone. Any person entering the zone without the permission of the U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port is subject to a penalty of not more than $40,000 for each violation or a criminal penalty resulting in imprisonment of not more than 10 years.

To view the full "Notice of Security Zone," please click here or visit www.regulations.gov and then insert the text "USCG-2014-1010" in to the "Keyword" box and click "search." ***(USCG)***

NBG to open new minimart, gas station

SANTA RITA, Guam—U.S. Naval Base Guam (NBG) will be hosting a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Navy Exchange (NEX) Minimart and Gas Station on base at 9:30am, Dec. 19.

Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Marianas awarded the contract for the project on July 12, 2014 to P&S Construction and AMEC Engineering. The new NEX Minimart & Gas Station will replace the existing facility. The last day of operations for the existing Gas Station/Auto Port will be Dec. 18, 2014.

The new facility is a critical part of the revitalization and modernization of NBG. The facility consists of a large minimart facility with retail sales, customer service, receiving and storage, public toilets and employee facilities. The new facility will also feature a Subway fast food franchise that will be in full operation by late December.

The gas station consists of seven double-sided fuel dispensing islands for three grades of gasoline and diesel, under a full canopy. The gas station also features debit/credit card sales point inside the minimart. There is also a tire air pump and auto vacuum station.

The project completion date is Dec. 18 with final contract cost of $8.9 million dollars. ***(PR)***

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Business

Russia's sinking economy becoming a global threat

WASHINGTON (AP)—Russia's suddenly escalating financial crisis risks spilling beyond its borders and endangering parts of the global economy.

With economies in Europe, Japan, China and Latin America already ailing, fresh threats have emerged from Russia's shriveled currency, its move to dramatically boost interest rates, the damage from plummeting oil prices and Western sanctions over Russia's action in Ukraine.

The alarming 10 percent drop in the ruble over the past two days has amplified the economic turmoil in Russia. Investors fear that Russia may default on its foreign debt obligations—a move that would inflict hundreds of billions in losses on lenders abroad.

Some analysts also worry that tensions will further escalate between Russia and the United States and its European allies that imposed the sanctions. The White House upped the pressure Tuesday when President Barack Obama committed to approving additional sanctions.

Few see President Vladimir Putin as backing down.

"I do not expect him to blink," said Ian Bremmer, president of the Eurasia Group, a political risk and consulting firm.

AP

People wait to exchange their currency as signs advertise the exchange rates at a currency exchange office in Moscow, Russia, Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2014.

The financial consequences for the United States could be modest because of Russia's diminished economic stature. Yet the geopolitical risk could ripple across continents.

Russia began the year as the world's eighth-largest economy, with a gross domestic product of $2.1 trillion, according to the World Bank. A single ruble is now worth less than two pennies, having lost about 50 percent of its value against the dollar since January.

This means Russia's GDP has been halved in dollar terms, putting it roughly on par with Mexico and Indonesia as the world's 15th largest economy.

Before financial markets opened Tuesday, the Bank of Russia hiked its key rate to protect the ruble's value. In doing so, the bank hopes investors will find it more financially appealing to keep their money in Russia. Nevertheless, the ruble fell in trading to close Tuesday at 80 rubles to a dollar, compared with 65 on Monday. It recovered in late trading to a rate of 68 to the dollar.

Japan trade deficit grows despite drop in imports

TOKYO (AP)—Japan logged a trade deficit in November, the 29th straight month of shortfalls, despite a slight decrease in imports thanks to the recent plunge in crude oil prices and Japan's return to recession.

The 891.9 billion yen ($8.5 billion) deficit in November compared with a 737 billion yen gap the month before, customs data showed Wednesday. However it was 32 percent lower than a year earlier.

Japan's costs for oil imports sank 22 percent in November from a year earlier, reducing total imports by 1.7 percent from a year earlier to 7.1 trillion yen ($60.7 billion). Exports rose 4.9 percent to 6.19 trillion yen ($52.9 billion).

Japan's trade surplus with the U.S. grew 20 percent over a year earlier to 582.1 billion yen ($5 billion) as an increase in shipments of machinery offset a 12 percent drop in the value of car exports. Its deficit with China, its biggest trading partner, rose 10 percent.

The recovery of the U.S. economy has helped Japan's exports, making up in part for China's slowing growth. Meanwhile, belt-tightening by consumers and businesses following a hike in Japan's sales tax in April has sapped import demand, even though the recent weakening of the Japanese yen would normally have pushed imports higher.

Apple wins class-action lawsuit over iPod prices

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—A federal jury decided Tuesday that Apple didn't compete unfairly when it sold music players and songs with copy-protection software that was incompatible with rival devices and music from competing online stores.

The eight-member jury in U.S. District Court handed Apple a victory by rejecting a claim from attorneys for consumers and iPod resellers, who were seeking as much as $1 billion in a class-action lawsuit. The plaintiffs argued that Apple was able to overcharge consumers for iPods by making it difficult to switch to a rival music player, as music bought from Apple's iTunes store wouldn't work on other players, nor would music from other stores work on iPods.

After just three hours of deliberation, the jury accepted Apple's argument that the software provided necessary security protection and was part of a larger package of improvements that made iPods and iTunes popular with consumers.

Apple applauded the verdict: "We created iPod and iTunes to give our customers the world's best way to listen to music. Every time we've updated those products—and every Apple product over the years—we've done it to make the user experience even better."

Apple no longer uses the copy-protection software in question, so the ruling has no effect on the company's current practices.

The case, originally filed in 2005, covers an estimated 8 million consumers who purchased iPods from 2006 to 2009, when the software was still in place.

The plaintiffs argued that the software locked people into using iPods and allowed Apple to overcharge for the devices. Plaintiffs were seeking $350 million in damages, which could have been tripled if the jury found Apple violated antitrust laws.

Attorneys for the plaintiffs said they plan to appeal. "We're glad we got this to the jury," attorney Bonny Sweeney said. But she said that a ruling by U.S. District Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers kept the jury from considering the impact of encryption code used in an iTunes software update that was the focus of the trial.

During a two-week trial, the plaintiffs' attorneys played a video of testimony by the late Apple CEO Steve Jobs, who died in 2011. They also showed emails between Apple executives that indicated they were concerned about some early efforts by rival companies to sell digital music files that might be played on iPods.

But Apple executives testified they were focused on preventing unauthorized copying—which was a big concern of recording labels—and said Apple was worried that digital files from outside sources might compromise the security of its iTunes software.

Nation

Ex-Marine wanted in 6 killings commits suicide

PENNSBURG, Pa. (AP)—An Iraq War veteran suspected of killing his ex-wife and five of her relatives in a shooting and slashing frenzy was found dead of self-inflicted stab wounds Tuesday in the woods of suburban Philadelphia, ending a day-and-a-half manhunt that closed schools and left people on edge.

Bradley William Stone's body was discovered a half-mile from his Pennsburg home, about 30 miles northwest of Philadelphia. The 35-year-old former Marine sergeant had cuts in the center of his body, and some kind of knife was found at the scene, Montgomery County District Attorney Risa Vetri Ferman said.

Locked in a custody dispute so bitter that his ex-wife feared for her life, Stone went on a gruesome, 90-minute killing rampage before daybreak Monday at three homes in three nearby towns, authorities said. He bashed in the back doors of the first two homes and then smashed his ex-wife's sliding glass door with a propane tank.

The killings set off the second major manhunt to transfix Pennsylvania in the past few months. Survivalist Eric Frein spent 48 days on the run in the Poconos after the ambush slaying of a state trooper in September.

"There's no reason, no valid excuse, no justification for snuffing out these six innocent lives and injuring another child," Ferman said. "This is just a horrific tragedy that our community has had to endure. We're really numb from what we've had to go through over the past two days."

Stone's former wife, 33-year-old Nicole Stone, was found shot twice in the face in her apartment after a neighbor heard glass breaking and saw Stone fleeing around 5 a.m. with their two young daughters. The girls were later found safe with Stone's neighbors.

Also killed were Nicole Stone's mother, grandmother, sister, brother-in-law and 14-year-old niece. A 17-year-old nephew suffered knife wounds to the head and hands, and Ferman said he was in "very serious" condition.

The adults were shot. The teens were slashed and suffered blows to their heads; the nephew had a gaping skull fracture, authorities said.

"It's a relief that they found him," said Stone's neighbor Dale Shupe. "Now we know he's not out trying to do more harm to anybody else."

AP: Carolinas politicians get payouts from broker

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Soon after taking office, North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory and U.S. Rep. Mark Sanford of South Carolina accepted six-figure stock payouts from an online mortgage broker accused by regulators of deceiving its customers.

The two Republicans served as directors at Tree.com, the Charlotte-based corporate parent of the website LendingTree. As board members, they were entitled to large chunks of restricted company stock if they held their positions long enough. Both resigned after their election victories, which would have rendered their unvested stock worthless had the board not taken special action to provide them early payouts.

McCrory and Sanford deny they did anything improper by accepting the stock payouts, which were not fully described in their ethics statements. Their timing and total value are only being revealed now, as the result of an Associated Press investigation into the company's financial records and interviews with Tree.com officials.

Early vesting of restricted shares for departing directors is not unheard of in the corporate world.

However, more than a dozen securities lawyers and ethics experts told the AP that such stock payouts are uncommon for elected officials, and raise significant concerns. These experts gave differing opinions about whether laws were broken.

But "there is no question (this) raises a host of red flags for prosecutors and regulators," said Jacob Frenkel, who handled corruption cases as a federal prosecutor and served as senior counsel in the Securities and Exchange Commission's Division of Enforcement.

In the months after receiving his $171,071 payout of stock from Tree.com, McCrory appointed the state's banking director and a majority of the banking commissioners who regulate mortgage brokers.

McCrory spokesman Josh Ellis said there was nothing irregular about that.

"There's absolutely no conflict and nothing improper about these appointments," he said.

Rain could spell trouble for Calif. water conservation

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—After California's driest three years on record, there have been few sounds as disturbing to water conservationists as the whisk-whisk-whisk of automatic lawn sprinklers kicking on directly behind TV reporters covering some of the state's first heavy downpours in years.

Recent storms eased the drought somewhat, but there's a long way to go. And state officials are worried that the rain will give people an excuse to abandon the already inconsistent conservation efforts adopted to deal with the dry spell.

When Gov. Jerry Brown declared a drought emergency in January, he asked people to cut water use by 20 percent. Instead, many Californians' water use actually went up for a while. Dozens of communities called for mandatory water cuts but lacked the means to enforce them. So lawn watering, golf course maintenance and curbside car washes went on without interruption.

State officials and weather experts say it's too early to know if the storms are the beginning of the end of the drought. They pledge to keep promoting conservation.

"A deluge like this makes us feel, `Oh, my God, it must be over,'" said Felicia Marcus, chairwoman of the state Water Resources Control Board, which instituted monthly water-use reporting this year to bring home to Californians how much water they were using.

But "we are in a really deep hole ... and we have to act like we are in the drought of our lives." She said officials will "keep working on it even after the drought because there's going to be another one around the bend."

The water board found last month that some well-off Southern California communities were still using more than 500 gallons per person a day—10 times the amount used by some poorer cities. Marcus and others pledged to step up education efforts.

Climatologist Bill Patzert, a drought expert at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, rose at 3 a.m. last week to bask in the sound of rain from the first big storm to roll through Southern California in a long time. By dawn, he was glowering at television reports showing water-wasting automatic sprinklers whirring in the rain behind at the scene of mudslides and floods.

"Tell them to turn off their damn sprinklers for a week. Tell them I said so," Patzert said. "We're still in a drought."

Asia

141—mostly children—killed in Pakistan attack

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP)—In the deadliest slaughter of innocents in Pakistan in years, Taliban gunmen attacked a military-run school Tuesday and killed 141 people—almost all of them students—before government troops ended the siege.

The massacre of innocent children horrified a country already weary of unending terrorist attacks. Pakistan's teenage Nobel Peace laureate Malala Yousafzai—herself a survivor of a Taliban shooting—said she was "heartbroken" by the bloodshed.

Even Taliban militants in neighboring Afghanistan decried the killing spree, calling it "un-Islamic."

If the Pakistani Taliban extremists had hoped the attack would cause the government to ease off its military offensive that began in June in the country's tribal region, it appeared to have the opposite effect. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif pledged to step up the campaign that—along with U.S. drone strikes—has targeted the militants.

"The fight will continue. No one should have any doubt about it," Sharif said. "We will take account of each and every drop of our children's blood."

Taliban fighters have struggled to maintain their potency in the face of the military operation. They vowed a wave of violence in response to the operation, but until Tuesday, there has only been one major attack by a splinter group near the Pakistan-India border in November. Analysts said the school siege showed that even diminished, the militant group still could inflict horrific carnage.

The rampage at the Army Public School and College began in the morning when seven militants scaled a back wall using a ladder, said Maj. Gen. Asim Bajwa, a military spokesman. When they reached an auditorium where students had gathered for an event, they opened fire.

A 14-year-old, Mehran Khan, said about 400 students were in the hall when the gunmen broke through the doors and started shooting. They shot one of the teachers in the head and then set her on fire and shouted "God is great!" as she screamed, added Khan, who survived by playing dead.

From there, they went to classrooms and other parts of the school.

"Their sole purpose, it seems, was to kill those innocent kids. That's what they did," Bajwa said. Of the 141 people slain before government troops ended the assault eight hours later, 132 were children and nine were staff members. Another 121 students and three staff members were wounded.

The seven attackers, wearing vests of explosives, all died in the eight-hour assault. It was not immediately clear if they were all killed by the soldiers or whether they blew themselves up, he said.

The wounded—some still wearing their green school blazers—flooded into hospitals as terrified parents searched for their children. By evening, funeral services were already being held for many of the victims as clerics announced the deaths over mosque loudspeakers.

The government declared three days of mourning for what appeared to be Pakistan's deadliest since a 2007 suicide bombing in the port city of Karachi killed 150 people.

"My son was in uniform in the morning. He is in a casket now," wailed one parent, Tahir Ali, as he came to the hospital to collect the body of his 14-year-old son, Abdullah. "My son was my dream. My dream has been killed."

One of the wounded students, Abdullah Jamal, said he was with a group of eighth, ninth and 10th graders who were getting first-aid instructions and training with a team of army medics when the violence became real. Panic broke out when the shooting began.

"I saw children falling down who were crying and screaming. I also fell down. I learned later that I have got a bullet," he said, speaking from his hospital bed.

Another student, Amir Mateen, said they locked the door from the inside when they heard the shooting, but gunmen blasted through anyway and opened fire.

Responding to the attack, armored personnel carriers were deployed around the school, and a military helicopter circled overhead.

A little more than 1,000 students and staff were registered at the school, which is part of a network run by the military, although the surrounding area is not heavily fortified. The student body is made up of both children of military personnel as well as civilians.

Most of the students appeared to be civilians rather than children of army staff, said Javed Khan, a government official. Analysts said the militants likely targeted the school because of its military connections.

"It's a kind of a message that `we can also kill your children,'" said Pakistani analyst Zahid Hussain.

In a statement to reporters, Taliban spokesman Mohammed Khurasani claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it was retribution for the military's operation in nearby North Waziristan, the northwestern tribal region where the group's fighters largely have been based.

Taliban attacks on Pakistan

Taliban militants claim to have been behind dozens of attacks on Pakistani targets in 2014. More recent ones have been seen as retaliation for an army offensive on militant strongholds in the northwest that officially began in June.

The following are the biggest reported attacks this year:

Jan. 20: Suicide bomber kills at least 14 people at security checkpoint near Pakistani military headquarters in Rawalpindi.

Feb. 13: Suicide bomber rams explosives-laden car into police bus in southern Pakistan, killing 13.

June 8-10: Two attacks by Taliban fighters on Karachi airport, Pakistan's busiest, leave at least 28 dead.

June 15: Pakistan launches a major offensive in the Taliban stronghold of North Waziristan.

Aug. 15: Pakistani soldiers kill 11 gunmen from a Taliban faction who took part in attacks on two airbases in southwestern Pakistan.

Sept. 9: About six Taliban militants carry out an unsuccessful attack on a dockyard in the southern port city of Karachi.

Nov. 2: 60 killed in suicide bombing on Pakistani side of border crossing with India. Jamaat ul Ahrar, an al-Qaida-linked splinter group of the Pakistani Taliban, claims responsibility.

Dec. 16: Pakistani Taliban kill dozens of children at a military-run school in northwestern Pakistan.

Source: Dpa, Reuters
Graphic: Staff, Tribune News Service

World

Aussie leader: System failed to track siege gunman

SYDNEY (AP)—Australia's prime minister acknowledged Wednesday that the nation's security system failed to keep track of a gunman responsible for a deadly siege at a Sydney cafe, and promised a transparent investigation into why the man was not on any terror watch list despite having a long criminal history.

Man Haron Monis, a 50-year-old Iranian-born, self-styled cleric described by Prime Minister Tony Abbott as deeply disturbed, took 17 people hostage inside a downtown Sydney cafe on Monday. Sixteen hours later, the siege ended in a barrage of gunfire when police rushed in to free the captives. Two hostages were killed along with Monis.

"The system did not adequately deal with this individual," Abbott conceded on Wednesday. "Two very decent people are dead, others are injured, others are traumatized because of a madman who was roaming our streets."

Abbott

Monis was convicted and sentenced last year to 300 hours of community service for sending what a judge called "grossly offensive" letters to families of soldiers killed in Afghanistan between 2007 and 2009. He later was charged with being an accessory to the murder of his ex-wife. Earlier this year, he was charged with the 2002 sexual assault of a woman. He had been out on bail on all the charges.

Just three days before Monis began his deadly rampage, Australia's highest court refused to hear his appeal against his convictions for sending the letters.

High Court documents show that Chief Justice Robert French and Justice Chief Stephen Gageler ruled at 9:50 a.m. on Friday that the full bench of their court would not hear Monis's constitutional challenge to his convictions. At 9:44 a.m. the next business day, a shotgun-wielding Monis walked into the cafe, just a short stroll from the courtroom where the ruling was delivered.

Abbott said the government would publish a report on how the siege unfolded, why Monis was not on the nation's terrorism watch list, and how he managed to obtain a shotgun in a country with strict gun ownership laws.

The prime minister acknowledged it was impossible for security agencies to monitor everyone, forcing them to make judgment calls about who posed the greatest risk for committing violence against innocent people.

"We want to know why he wasn't being monitored given his history of violence, his history of mental instability and his history of infatuation with extremism," Abbott said.

Vatican offers olive branch to US nuns

VATICAN CITY (AP)—A sweeping Vatican investigation into Roman Catholic nuns in the U.S. that began amid fears they had become too feminist and secular ended up praising the sisters for their selfless work caring for the poor—a major shift in tone that reflected the social justice mindset of Pope Francis.

The overwhelmingly positive report Tuesday also promised to value their "feminine genius" more, while gently suggesting ways to serve the church faithfully and survive amid a steep drop in their numbers. It was cheered by the American sisters themselves, dozens of whom swarmed the Vatican news conference announcing the results in a rare occasion of women outnumbering men at the Vatican.

"There is an encouraging and realistic tone in this report," Sister Sharon Holland told reporters. "Challenges are understood, but it is not a document of blame, or of simplistic solutions. One can read the text and feel appreciated and trusted to carry on."

The report was most remarkable for what it didn't say, given the criticism of American religious life that prompted the Vatican under Pope Benedict XVI to launch the investigation in 2009.

There was no critique of the nuns, no demands that they shift their focus from social justice to emphasize Catholic teaching on abortion, no condemnation that a feminist, secular mentality had taken hold in their ranks.

Rather, while offering a sobering assessment of the difficult state of American congregations, the report praised the sisters' dedication and reaffirmed their calling in a reflection of the pastoral tone characteristic of history's first Jesuit pope.

It was a radically different message than that of another Vatican office that investigated an umbrella group of the sisters' leaders.

That investigation, conducted by the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, resulted in a Vatican takeover of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in 2012. The doctrine office determined that the LCWR, which represents the leaders of 80 percent of U.S. nuns, took positions that undermined church teaching and promoted "radical feminist themes incompatible with the Catholic faith."

The Vatican's congregation

WORLD BRIEFS

Ireland plans May vote on legalizing gay marriage

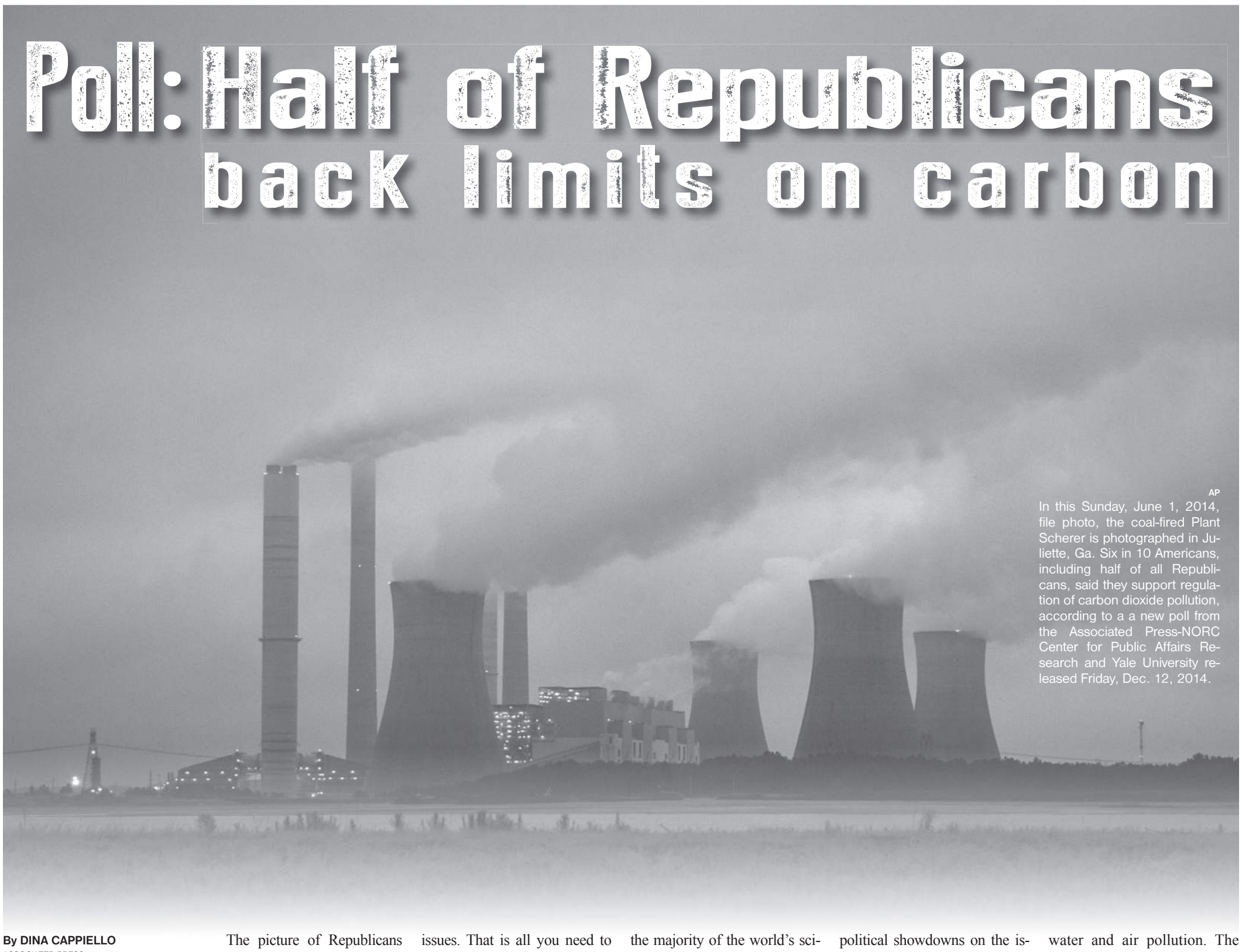
DUBLIN (AP)—Prime Minister Enda Kenny says Ireland's voters will be asked to legalize gay marriage, a government-backed measure that reflects rapid social change in the predominantly Catholic nation. Kenny told lawmakers Tuesday that the government would subject its planned Marriage Equality Bill to a public referendum in May, though a precise date has not been selected. The vote is needed to amend the family section of Ireland's 77-year-old constitution. Ireland legalized civil partnerships for homosexual couples in 2011. Such partnerships confer weaker legal rights than for a married couple on matters of child custody and welfare access, particularly in event of relationship breakdown. Recent Irish opinion polls indicate around three-fourths of voters support legalizing gay marriage. More than a dozen nations and most U.S. states already have taken the step.

American pops question at Eiffel Tower ice-rink

PARIS (AP)—It could have been a scene from fairytale movie "Frozen." And an AP photographer snapping tourists at the Eiffel Tower's Christmas ice-rink Tuesday happened upon the fairytale moment. Real estate agent Jon McAchran, 32, of Virginia Beach, Virginia, provoked instant applause when he got down on one frosty knee (and ice-skate) to pop the question on the ice to his girlfriend Ashley Marie Kimberl, 30, presenting her with a sparkling diamond engagement ring. Kimberl confirmed her answer to the AP: "We're getting married!" She gushed that "it was a surprise, as our first date was on an ice-rink in Virginia." This was not the first time that the question has been popped at the Eiffel Tower—Tom Cruise famously asked Katie Holmes to marry him there in 2005.

Environment

Poll: Half of Republicans back limits on carbon



AP
In this Sunday, June 1, 2014, file photo, the coal-fired Plant Scherer is photographed in Juliette, Ga. Six in 10 Americans, including half of all Republicans, said they support regulation of carbon dioxide pollution, according to a a new poll from the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and Yale University released Friday, Dec. 12, 2014.

By DINA CAPPIELLO
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP)—When Republicans take control of Congress next month, top on their agenda will be undoing environmental regulations they claim will harm the economy, chief among them President Barack Obama's plans to limit heat-trapping carbon pollution from coal-fired power plants.

The results of a new poll from the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and Yale University show their priorities may be misplaced.

Six in 10 Americans, including half of all Republicans, said they support regulation of carbon dioxide pollution, although they weren't asked how. Nearly half of Republicans said the U.S. should lead the global fight to curb climate change, even if it means taking action when other countries do not. And majorities across party lines said environmental protections "improve economic growth and provide new jobs" in the long run, a popular Obama administration talking point.

The picture of Republicans that emerges from the poll runs counter to the monolithic view of Republicans in Washington as a global warming-doubting, anti-environmental regulation party keen on attacking Obama's environmental plans. And the results come as the Obama administration continues to forge ahead on its own with aggressive plans on climate change, even if it means going head-to-head with a Republican-controlled Congress that could derail the administration's environmental legacy.

"The American people have made it clear they know climate change is real, and that we can protect the planet and grow the economy at the same time," Frank Benenati, a White House spokesman, said after reviewing the poll results. "Climate deniers in Congress and those who would try to block efforts to address the climate challenge would do well to listen."

Still, climate change itself ranked near the bottom of environmental problems tested in the poll.

"Global warming was second to last among environmental issues. That is all you need to know," said Mike McKenna, a GOP pollster and consultant.

In recent weeks and months, the White House has announced a deal with China to curb the greenhouse gases blamed for global warming and pledged $3 billion to a fund that helps poor countries prepare for climate change, further irking Republicans after a near sweep in the midterm elections.

The divisions between Republicans and Democrats on global warming are real, the poll shows, and stark. A little over a quarter of Republicans believe global warming is an extremely or very serious problem, compared with 64 percent of Democrats. And while nearly three-quarters of Democrats believe global warming is happening, less than half of Republicans do.

"Americans are more concerned about the economy, jobs, and affordable and reliable energy, which is counter to the type of regulations coming out of President Obama's EPA," Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., said in a statement. Inhofe, who has called global warming a hoax and dismisses the opinions of the majority of the world's scientists on global warming, will chair the Senate Environment Committee next year.

"This poll proves that Republicans here in Washington are disconnected from average Republicans across the country," said Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., the current chairwoman of the Senate environment panel. "Anyone with a pulse and a heartbeat—with the exception of Republicans in Congress—knows that climate change is upon us, and we must step up and reduce dangerous carbon pollution."

While issues such as global warming and the Keystone XL oil pipeline are front-burner for politicians, the AP-NORC and Yale poll shows that they are not top-line issues for many Americans, even compared with a dozen other environmental concerns.

After the Senate failed to pass a bill approving the Keystone XL oil pipeline, which would carry Canadian tar sands oil to Texas refineries, Republicans vowed to try again next year. But despite protests waged by environmental groups, and the political showdowns on the issue, the new poll shows that half of Americans have no strong opinion on the pipeline - 31 percent favor it, 18 percent oppose it, and the rest are neutral or not sure. A majority of Republicans support it, but Democrats are more ambivalent than opposed.

Obama has said he would base his decision on approving the pipeline on whether it would exacerbate global warming.

Yet relatively few Americans make the connection between fossil fuels, the primary culprit in global warming, and environmental risks. Only a third of people surveyed said they were concerned about coal or oil's environmental risks, suggesting possible support for the Republicans' defense of those industries and an energy production boom overseen by the Obama administration even as it tackles global warming. Even fewer Americans were concerned about the environmental risks posed by natural gas, which is in the midst of a boom thanks to the technology of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. Fracking has been banned in some areas because of concerns over water and air pollution. The EPA is considering whether the practice needs more federal regulation.

The poll also suggests there are limits to Obama's go-it-alone strategy on global warming: 58 percent of Americans say there should be no global treaty, or the Obama administration should only proceed to negotiate one with the Senate's backing.

The AP-NORC Center and Yale University survey of 1,578 adults was conducted online Nov. 20-Dec. 1, using a sample drawn from GfK's probability-based KnowledgePanel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 2.9 percentage points.

Funding for the survey comes from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

Respondents were first selected randomly using phone or mail survey methods and later interviewed online. People selected for KnowledgePanel who didn't otherwise have access to the Internet were provided access at no cost to them.

Life & Style

Review: 'The Hobbit' wraps with a MIDDLE-EARTH MELEE

By JAKE COYLE
AP Film Writer

AP

In this image released by Warner Bros. Pictures, Martin Freeman appears in a scene from "The Hobbit The Battle of the Five Armies."

With a sum total of 1,032 minutes, Peter Jackson's six J.R.R. Tolkien films have earned more than $5 billion worldwide. They have made New Zealand synonymous with Middle-earth. And they have slaughtered enough orcs to constitute genocide.

The sheer size of Jackson's accomplishment—a majestic, fully realized fantasy world, from its lush landscapes down to its hairy feet—is enough to make Cecil B. DeMille blush. Across craggy mountaintops and through enchanted forests, he has set his hobbits, elves and wizards scampering to and fro, always under the threat of greed, ego and selfishness. More than anything, he has taken the stuff of fantasy seriously and rendered Tolkien's splendid creation with love.

Sadly, all of that was true after Jackson's "Lord of the Rings" trilogy. The subsequent "Hobbit" trio, which is now finally sputtering to an end with "The Battle of the Five Armies," will inevitably go down as an unneeded, unloved gratuity, a trilogy, like the second "Star Wars" run, to write off as overkill.

The magic, fleeting to start with, is mostly gone. "The Hobbit" might have been a nice little prequel add-on to "The Lord of the Rings," but by dividing it into three movies, Jackson and company have drained the book's dramatic momentum.

The first, "An Unexpected Journey," remains in one's memory only for its clown-car introduction of the 13 hobbits in an interminable dinner scene I fear is just now approaching dessert. "The Desolation of Smaug," for me the most successfully rollicking of these three, brought in (finally) another woman (Evangeline Lilly's elf Tauriel) and Benedict Cumberbatch's glorious dragon.

What most distinguishes "The Battle of the Five Armies" is its relative torpor. After five films of relentless forward motion, its characters always in perpetual flight, Jackson's "Hobbit" has, as if out of gas, plopped down at the Lonely Mountain. Picking up with Smaug's fiery escape, "Five Armies" caps "The Hobbit" with a Middle-earth melee as all forces gather around Erebor.

The riches inside the mountain draw dwarfs (led by Richard Armitage's king Thorin), elves (ruled by Lee Pace's wonderfully snobbish Thran-duil), a smattering of humans (most notably Luke Evans's Bard) and, of course, huge armies of hulking orcs.

All the commotion doesn't leave much room for Martin Freeman's Bilbo Baggins. The funny, natural Freeman is one of the best things to hit Jackson's overly earnest epic (it's an hour into "Five Armies" before the first chuckle), but he has often been crowded out by the avalanche of characters and CGI effects. Perhaps—and I know this could strike Jackson as incredulous—a battle scene need not be an hour long?

The action, too, comes in Jackson's preferred 48 frames-per-second (theater options will vary; and the film is also in 3-D), which, in the mission of greater clarity, yields a heightened artificiality. Some believe this high-frame-rate is the future (James Cameron is a fan), but for now, it's the greatest evidence that some 15 years down a Hobbit hole—both pleasingly and frustratingly far from reality—have marred Jackson's vision. Effects-only shots look fine, but live-action appears like a soap opera.

But maybe it's time to admire Jackson for his obsessions. He has spent a very long time in Middle-earth and his affection for it hasn't, for even 1/48th of a moment, ever been in doubt. It is his precious.

"The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies," a Warner Bros. release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for "extended sequences of intense fantasy action violence and frightening images." Running time: 144 minutes. Two stars out of four.

Sony under attack from hackers and ex-employees

NEW YORK (AP)—Threats of violence against movie theaters. Cancelled showings of "The Interview." Leaks of thousands more private emails. Lawsuits by former employees that could cost tens of millions in damages.

The fallout from the hack that began four weeks ago exploded Tuesday after the shadowy group calling themselves Guardians of Peace escalated their attack beyond corporate espionage and threatened moviegoers with violence reminiscent of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

The Department of Homeland Security said there was "no credible intelligence to indicate an active plot against movie theaters," but noted it was still analyzing messages from the group, dubbed GOP. The warning did prompt law enforcement in New York and Los Angeles to address measures to ramp up security.

Those security fears spurred Sony to allow theater chains to cancel showings of the Seth Rogen and James Franco comedy "The Interview," that has been a focus of the hackers' mission to bring down Sony. Carmike Cinemas, which operates 247 theaters across the country, was the first to cancel its planned screenings of the film, according to The Hollywood Reporter. It remains to be seen if other chains will follow suit.

GOP also released a trove of data files including 32,000 emails to and from Sony Entertainment CEO Michael Lynton in what it called the beginning of a "Christmas gift."

And two former Sony film production workers filed lawsuits alleging the Culver City, California company waited too long to notify nearly 50,000 employees that data such as Social Security numbers, salaries and medical records had been stolen.

The filing follows another lawsuit this week from two other former Sony employees accusing the studio of being negligent by not bolstering its defenses against hackers before the attack. It claims emails and other leaked information show that Sony's information-technology department and its top lawyer believed its security system was vulnerable to attack, but that company did not act on those warnings.

Sony, a unit of Japan's Sony Corp., potentially faces tens of millions of dollars in damages from class-action lawsuits, said Jonathan Handel, an entertainment law professor at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law.

"It is a serious matter for Sony both in terms of dollar exposure and public perception of the brand," he said.

In "The Interview," Rogen and Franco star as television journalists involved in a CIA plot to assassinate North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Speculation about a North Korean link to the Sony hacking has centered on that country's angry denunciation of the film. Over the summer, North Korea warned that the film's release would be an "act of war that we will never tolerate." It said the U.S. will face "merciless" retaliation.

The film's New York premiere is scheduled for Thursday at Manhattan's Landmark Sunshine, and it is expected to hit theaters nationwide on Christmas Day. It premiered in Los Angeles last week.

But on Tuesday Rogen and Franco pulled out of all media appearances, canceling a Buzzfeed Q&A and Rogen's planned guest spot Thursday on "Late Night With Seth Meyers."

AP

In this Dec. 2, 2014 file photo, cars enter Sony Pictures Entertainment headquarters in Culver City, Calif.

A representative for Rogen said he had no comment. A spokeswoman for Franco didn't respond to queries Tuesday.

The FBI said it is aware of the GOP's threats and "continues to work collaboratively with our partners to investigate this matter." FBI director James Comey last week said that investigators are still trying to determine who is responsible for the hack.

The New York Police Department, after coordinating with the FBI and Sony, plans to beef up security at the Manhattan premiere, said John Miller, the NYPD's top counterterrorism official.

"Having read through the threat material myself, it's actually not crystal clear whether it's a cyber response that they are threatening or whether it's a physical attack," Miller said. "That's why we're continuing to evaluate the language of it, and also the source of it. I think our primary posture is going to be is going to have a police presence and a response capability that will reassure people who may have heard about this and have concerns."

Following a commission meeting earlier Tuesday, Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck said his department takes the hackers' threats "very seriously" and will be taking extra precautions during the holidays at theaters.

The National Association of Theatre Owners had no comment on the developing situation. Neither Sony nor representatives from individual theater chains, including Carmike, responded to requests for comment.

Since the hack surfaced late last month, everything from financial figures to salacious emails between top Sony executives has been dumped online.

The nearly 32,000 emails to and from Sony Pictures Entertainment CEO Lynton leaked Tuesday include information about casting decisions and total costs for upcoming films, release schedules for Sony films through 2018 and corporate financial records, such as royalties from iTunes, Spotify and Pandora music services. They include information about new electronics devices such as DVD players and cell phones. They also include budget figures for the Motion Picture Association of America, of which Sony is a member, and at least one email about a senior Sony executive who left the company. The emails also include banal messages about public appearances, tennis matches, home repairs, dinner invitations and business introductions.

Cosby won't be charged over molestation claim

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Los Angeles prosecutors on Tuesday declined to file any charges against Bill Cosby after a woman recently claimed the comedian molested her around 1974.

The rejection of a child sexual abuse charge by prosecutors came roughly 10 days after the woman, Judy Huth, met with Los Angeles police detectives for 90 minutes.

The Los Angeles County district attorney's office rejected filing a misdemeanor charge of annoying or molesting a child under the age of 18 because the statute of limitations had passed.

Days before Huth spoke to police, she accused Cosby in a civil lawsuit of forcing her to perform a sex act on him in a bedroom of the Playboy Mansion when she was 15 years old. Cosby's attorney said that Huth attempted to extort $250,000 from the comedian before she sued and that she'd attempted to sell her story to a tabloid a decade ago.

Cosby is seeking a dismissal of Huth's lawsuit, arguing it is blocked by the statute of limitations.

Huth told police that Cosby molested her and that she had no further contact with him after the incident, according to a summary of her allegations included with the prosecutor's decision.

In rejecting the case, prosecutors evaluated the charge Cosby would have faced in 1974. Prosecutors took into account legislative changes that extend the statute of limitations for certain crimes but found no way that Cosby could be legally prosecuted.

The statute of limitations for filing a misdemeanor case is one year; the statute of limitations for a felony sex crime committed in 1974 was three years, according to the prosecutors' analysis.

"It is our understanding that the decision not to prosecute was based on the statute of limitations and not on the merits of Ms. Huth's claims," Huth's attorney, Gloria Allred, wrote in a statement.

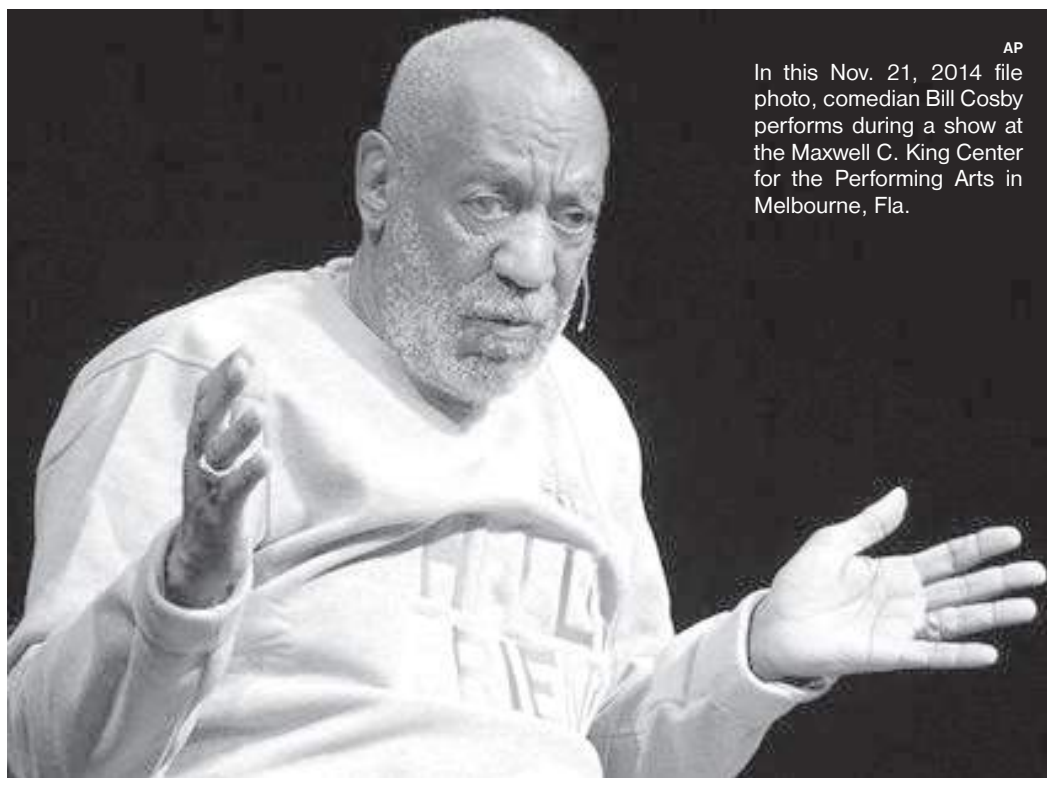
Cosby's attorney, Marty Singer, did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

Huth is one of at least 15 women who have come forward since early November with claims that Cosby sexually assaulted them decades ago. Most of the women say the comedian drugged them before he assaulted them. She is one of two women suing Cosby; a second woman is suing for defamation.

Cosby has never been charged in connection with any of the allegations. A 2005 lawsuit by a Pennsylvania woman was settled before it went to trial.

Since the allegations emerged, Cosby's career has unraveled, with nearly a dozen performances canceled in his ongoing standup comedy tour. NBC has said it will not move forward with a Cosby sitcom that was under development, and Netflix indefinitely postponed a special that was set to premiere last month.

Cosby's attorneys have denied some of the allegations and dismissed others as decades old and "discredited."



AP

In this Nov. 21, 2014 file photo, comedian Bill Cosby performs during a show at the Maxwell C. King Center for the Performing Arts in Melbourne, Fla.

Robin Williams tops 2014 list of Google searches

AP

In this March 27, 2010 file photo, actor Robin Williams speaks at The 24th American Cinematheque Awards in Beverly Hills, Calif.

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Robin Williams' suicide seared into the world's collective mindset more than anything else this year, based on what people were searching for on Google.

The reaction to Williams' death in August topped Google's list of 2014's fastest-rising search requests. It beat notable events such as the World Cup, the Ebola outbreak, the March disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 and the Ice Bucket Challenge, an Internet video craze to raise awareness and money for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's Disease.

Other topics of worldwide intrigue on Google included the addictive smartphone game "Flappy Bird," bearded drag queen Conchita Wurst, the Middle East extremist group ISIS, the hit Disney movie "Frozen" and the Winter Olympics in Russia.

Williams, Ebola, the World Cup and the Ice Bucket also ranked among the most-discussed subjects this year on Facebook, which released its list last week. Google released its list Tuesday.

Williams' death drove many people to reminisce about his career highlights. In the first few days after his suicide, there was a six-fold increase in the number of Google searches for "carpe diem"—a Latin phrase for "seize the day" that Williams popularized in the film "Dead Poets Society." Reports about Williams' long-running battle with depression caused searches for that term to triple. There was also a flurry of searches about his movies (the top five were: "Mrs. Doubtfire," ``Dead Poets Society," ``Good Will Hunting," ``Jumanji" and "Patch Adams.")

Google's worldwide list of the year's hottest search requests mirrored the activity in the U.S. with a few exceptions. Wurst didn't make the Top 10 list in the U.S., nor did the Winter Olympics. Instead, Web surfers in the U.S. were seeking more information about the August confrontation that culminated in a white policeman shooting and killing Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Ukraine's conflict with Russia also held more intrigue in the U.S. than the rest of the world.

Google's review follows annual roundups compiled during the previous two weeks by its main search rivals. Although Google's list usually comes last each year, its rankings typically provide more telling insights into what people were thinking because the company's technology processes about two out of every three search requests made on the Internet.

Yahoo's search lists indicated that its websites tend to attract entertainment-minded people. While Ebola topped Yahoo's rankings for 2014, celebrities or entertainers occupied six of the other slots. They were singer Ariana Grande (No. 3), actress Jennifer Lawrence (No. 4), actress Kaley Cuoco (No. 5), reality TV star Kim Kardashian (No. 6), singer Miley Cyrus (No. 8) and actress Jennifer Aniston (No. 10). Yahoo's list was rounded out by: the video game "Minecraft," whose popularity prompted Microsoft to buy it for $2.5 billion earlier this year; "Frozen" and Apple's latest gadget, the iPhone 6.

Open adoption could help grandmother stay in touch

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR ABBY: I am writing this in response to "Un-Grandparent in Ohio" (Aug. 25), whose pregnant teenage daughter has decided to place her baby for adoption.

My daughter and son-in-law adopted their newborn daughter in an open adoption. Each summer the adoption agency sponsors a picnic that is attended by birth and adoptive parents, grandparents and other family members -- and, of course, the adopted child. During the rest of the year, our daughter sends the birth mother photos and letters, going through the same agency.

I can only imagine the sadness Un-Grandparent is feeling. I hope her daughter has chosen an adoption agency like this one so she will be able to share in her grandchild's life.

GRATEFUL ADOPTIVE GRANDMOTHER

DEAR GRATEFUL: I welcomed feedback from readers about that letter and, as always, they provided Un-Grandparent with thoughtful advice. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: I am a grandmother and an attorney. I have done a lot of guardianship work over the years and would like the grandmother to know that in many cases similar to hers, it is the grandmother who adopts the baby. This is often the best solution for everyone—especially the baby.

Most states favor adoptions by family members. It could be a wonderful ending/beginning for all concerned if that could happen in this case.

GRANDMA CLAIRE

DEAR ABBY: I went through this with my daughter, who was not in a mental or financial position to keep the child. I was in the delivery room for the birth of all my grandchildren, but in order to distance myself from this child, I allowed the adoptive mom to go into the delivery instead, because it was important for her to bond with the baby. It was easier, in a sense, to distance myself from this child because of my daughter's circumstances.

I think about my grandson all the time, and I get pictures from the adoptive family. When the time is right, he will meet his biological family. My hope is that Un-Grandparent can trust the adoptive parents to be the right ones and that they will do the right thing for the child.

CHRISTINE ON THE WEST COAST

DEAR ABBY: I was neither willing nor emotionally able to raise my 13-year-old daughter's child. There was an open adoption, with a family that had five children of their own, but neither my daughter nor I took the opportunity to get to know this child or his new family.

My parents (the baby's great-grandparents) made the effort to keep in touch and were welcomed with open arms. My parents brought ALL the children Christmas gifts, and my mother wrote to them often, visiting when they had a chance.

So, if this is an open adoption, there is still the possibility for you to have as much contact as everyone is comfortable with. There is no such thing as too much love!

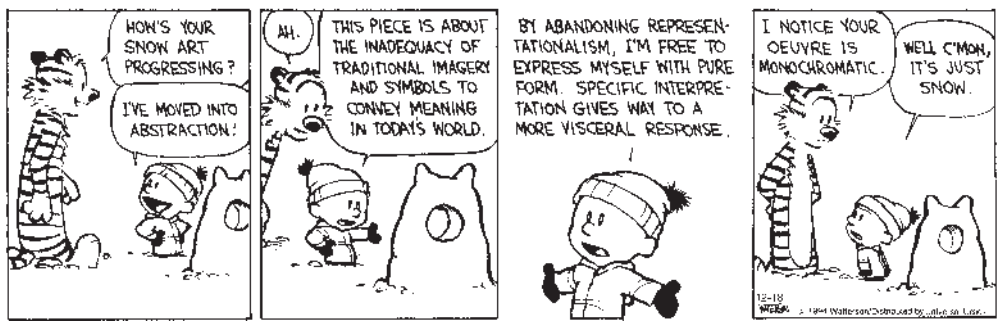
KATHRYN IN TEXAS

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


HOW'S YOUR SNOW ART PROGRESSING?
I'VE MOVED INTO ABSTRACTION!
AH.
THIS PIECE IS ABOUT THE INADEQUACY OF TRADITIONAL IMAGERY AND SYMBOLS TO CONVEY MEANING IN TODAY'S WORLD.
BY ABANDONING REPRESENTATIONALISM, I'M FREE TO EXPRESS MYSELF WITH PURE FORM. SPECIFIC INTERPRETATION GIVES WAY TO A MORE VISCERAL RESPONSE.
I NOTICE YOUR OEUVRE IS MONOCHROMATIC.
WELL C'MON, IT'S JUST SNOW.

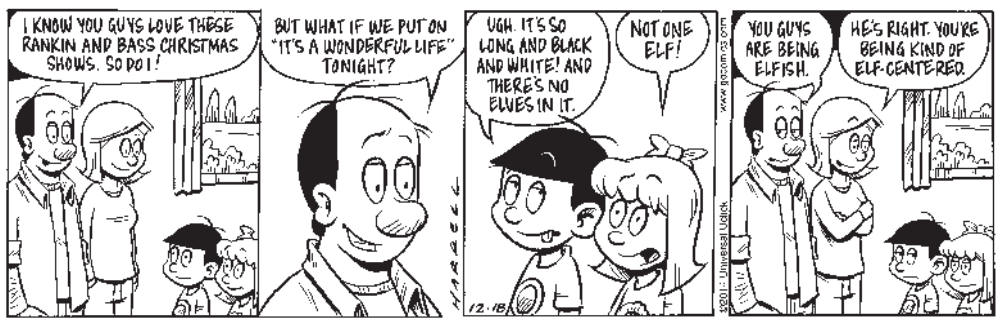
Garfield®

By Jim Davis

WE NOW RETURN TO "DICK, THE CAT WHO DIDN'T SAVE CHRISTMAS"
DICK, STOP CLAWING THE WATERBED!
OH, NO! THE PRESENTS ARE ALL SOAKED!
ALL RIGHT, DICK! NOW GO SWAT THE ORNAMENTS OFF THE TREE!

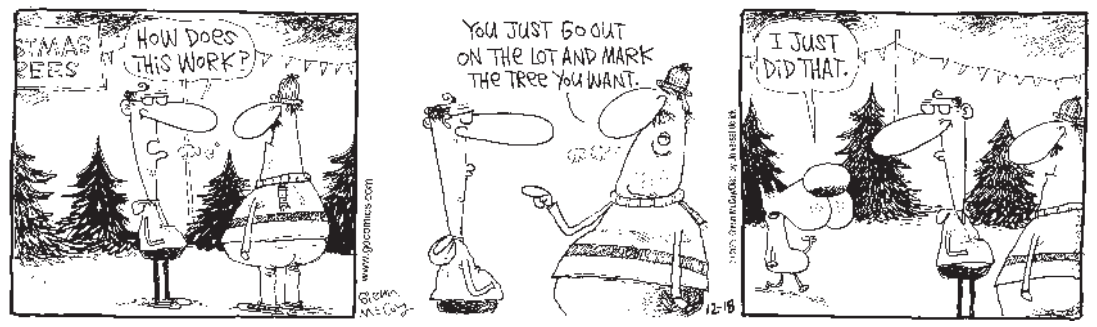
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


I KNOW YOU GUYS LOVE THESE RANKIN AND BASS CHRISTMAS SHOWS. SO DO I!
BUT WHAT IF WE PUT ON "IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE" TONIGHT?
UGH. IT'S SO LONG AND BLACK AND WHITE! AND THERE'S NO ELVES IN IT.
NOT ONE ELF!
YOU GUYS ARE BEING ELFISH.
HE'S RIGHT. YOU'RE BEING KIND OF ELF-CENTERED.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

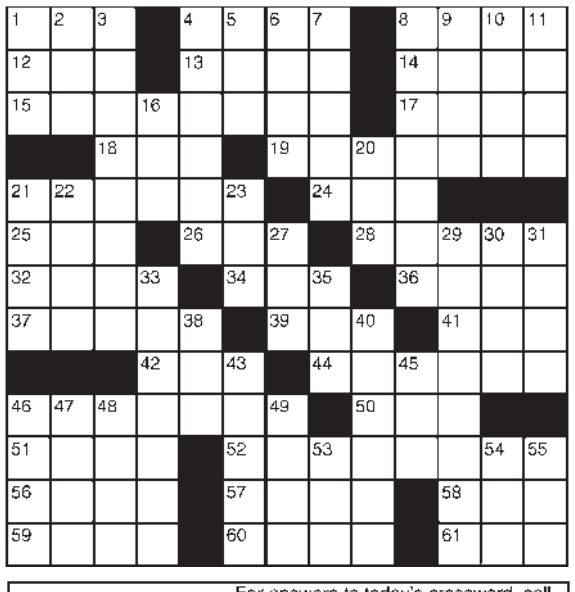
ACROSS
1 Jewel
4 Sherlock's find
8 Small salamanders
12 Boxing legend
13 React to yeast
14 Dismal cry
15 "Centennial" writer
17 Great Lake
18 "Please explain"
19 Break up
21 Miss Muffet's bugaboo
24 One side of the Urals (Abbr.)
25 Glutton
26 Schlep
28 Flops on Broadway
32 Memo acronym
34 Tend the lawn
36 — E. Coyote
37 Jeans material
39 Comic DeLuise
41 Shuffleboard stick
42 Negative prefix
44 Acceptable
46 Diary
50 Links prop
51 Vicinity
52 Mom of Sasha and Malia
56 Window ledge
57 Lotion add-in
58 Writer Fleming
59 Corridor
60 "Let's Make a Deal" option
61 "Science Guy" Bill

DOWN
1 Whale group
2 Yale student
3 Bipeninsular state
4 Embroidery yarn
5 Jeremy of basketball
6 Secondhand
7 Bizarre
8 Tweezer target
9 — song (cheaply)
10 Lookalike
11 Coaster
16 Scuttle
20 Long lunch?
21 Roe provider
22 Sit for a shot
23 Piratic potation
27 Deity
29 Goodyear alternative
30 Sad
31 Prognosticator
33 Arcade game
35 Stir-fry utensil
38 Cattle call
40 Mid-May honoree
43 Wanderer
45 Witness
46 Morse symbol
47 Diva's delivery
48 Holler
49 Metric measure
53 Bill's partner
54 Deposit
55 Away from WSW

Solution time: 24 mins.

S	F	A	■	A	V	E	R	■	C	R	A	G
N	E	D	■	L	I	R	E	■	R	O	L	E
U	S	E	■	C	A	R	D	T	A	B	L	E
B	O	N	G	O	■	■	O	W	N	■	■	■
■	■	■	A	V	E	C	■	O	N	I	C	E
■	A	B	L	E	T	O	P	■	Y	O	U	R
H	L	E	■	S	A	M	O	A	■	T	E	N
U	R	A	L	■	T	O	P	B	R	A	S	S
G	A	M	E	Y	■	S	E	A	N	■	■	■
■	■	■	S	E	E	■	■	N	A	T	C	H
B	R	A	S	S	B	A	N	D	■	B	I	C
Y	O	Y	O	■	O	R	E	O	■	S	A	W
E	W	E	R	■	N	E	O	N	■	P	O	L

Yesterday's answer 12-18



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Christina Aguilera, 34; Katie Holmes, 36; Brad Pitt, 51; Steven Spielberg, 68.

Happy Birthday: Do your best to manipulate personal and professional situations to suit your needs. Staying on top of the possibilities that exist will be half the battle. As long as you don't rely on others to stand watch over your responsibilities, you will make gains from the changes you carefully put into play. Protect against physical mishaps or altercations. Your numbers are 6, 11, 22, 28, 31, 34, 47.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Re-evaluate your relationships with others. It's best to make needed changes before the year comes to a close. New beginnings will motivate you to take charge of your life and head in a direction that will make you happy. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Say what's on your mind. Make travel plans that will allow you to spend time with the ones you love. You'll find some interesting items to purchase, but be careful not to spend too much. Charity begins at home. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): You will face some uncertainty regarding your work or your relationship with one of your peers. Go above and beyond the call of duty and you will have less to worry about. Your effort will impress someone who can influence your future. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You'll come up with some excellent ideas that will please the ones you love. Shopping for that special someone will pay off. Enjoy the festivities going on around you, or plan your own little gathering. ✪✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Travel, go shopping or spend time finishing last-minute projects that need to be put to rest before the year comes to a close. Don't let an emotional situation at home paralyze you from following through with your plans. ✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Just say "yes." Keep life simple, precise and free of drama. Holding things together is something you do well, and with friends and family feeling the stress that often surfaces at this time of year, your steadiness will be welcomed. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Listen attentively, but don't sign up for something that isn't in your best interest. What you do to help a cause will be impressive if you offer your time and expertise. Donations will soon be forgotten. Make a difference. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Emotions will surface and nostalgia will set in. Remember, the past year will bring both fond and sour memories. Do your best to digest what's happened and reflect on the outcome before heading into the upcoming year. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Put your plans in motion. Tie up loose ends and prepare to make your way to a night out with friends or some family fun. Decorating or making positive changes to your home will get you in a festive mood. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Put more effort into tidying up loose ends and clearing up both professional and emotional matters that have been playing on your mind. Romance will help you clarify your feelings and enhance your personal future. Love is in the stars. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Keep your emotions in check. Now is not the time to bring up uncertainties regarding a partnership. Step back and take a moment to rethink how you should move forward. Strive for equality and you will find happiness. ✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Wanting to help those less fortunate is admirable, but do so by offering your time or services, not your hard-earned cash. Impulse purchases or donations will leave you in a precarious economic position when payments are due. Love is on the rise. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are unique, playful and passionate. You are strong-willed and persistent.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	6		2		1		8	
5								9
				7				
9			5		8			2
		2				6		
7			9		6			8
				5				
2								7
	7		6		3		1	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/18

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

4	2	8	5	9	7	1	6	3
1	3	7	8	4	6	9	5	2
6	9	5	3	2	1	4	8	7
8	1	6	2	7	5	3	4	9
5	4	9	1	3	8	2	7	6
2	7	3	4	6	9	8	1	5
3	6	2	7	8	4	5	9	1
9	8	1	6	5	3	7	2	4
7	5	4	9	1	2	6	3	8

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/17

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

CYBERSPACE Solution: 10 letters

S	W	C	C	A	T	A	D	S	V	M	N	(D)	E	M
C	E	O	R	S	A	E	D	I	R	T	(N)	E	S	A
I	B	M	E	E	P	N	R	E	G	(E)	E	T	U	R
T	S	P	A	Y	C	T	T	E	(S)	I	Y	E	O	G
E	I	U	T	G	U	E	M	I	S	O	T	A	M	O
N	T	T	E	A	O	A	I	E	V	E	C	A	L	R
R	E	E	L	T	I	E	C	V	L	I	A	I	L	P
E	C	R	S	L	P	U	D	E	E	W	R	R	A	S
B	H	L	S	E	R	E	D	I	O	D	A	U	C	L
Y	N	S	O	I	L	S	C	U	V	T	R	I	S	H
C	O	P	T	R	K	I	S	N	A	S	H	A	R	E
R	L	Y	S	O	T	E	F	V	O	P	L	A	C	E
E	O	K	O	I	R	N	A	L	A	C	O	D	E	S
A	G	B	L	S	N	E	O	R	O	N	L	I	N	E
L	Y	L	A	B	O	L	G	C	G	W	O	R	L	D

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Yesterday's Answer: Babushka Lady

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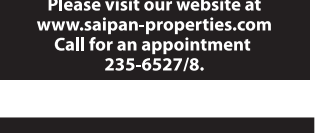

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Classified Ads

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Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

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4 US cities to bid for 2024 Summer Olympics

NEW YORK (AP)—The U.S. Olympic Committee will try to land the 2024 Olympics and end a 28-year drought without the Summer Games.

Which city will it pick? Stay tuned.

After hearing presentations from the four candidates Tuesday—Boston, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington—USOC board members voted to join the race, but not until they have a chance to mull over the candidates during the holidays.

"It's a four-way tie," CEO Scott Blackmun said, not diverging from the federation's closed-lip policy on this yearlong selection process. "We had great presentations, now we have an opportunity to explore how everyone felt about the presentations. We'll reflect, come back after the holidays and see what's in the best interest for the United States."

This was the expected move from a federation that lost badly the last two times it bid for the Games—New York for 2012 and Chicago for 2016—and hasn't played host to the Summer Olympics since the Atlanta Games in 1996.

The 2016 Olympics are set for Rio de Janeiro. The 2020 Games, which the United States did not bid for, will be in Tokyo.

America's chosen city for 2024 will be up against Rome and either Hamburg or Berlin. There will be others in the mix, as well, possibly including Paris, which is expected to announce its intention soon. The Games will be awarded in 2017.

"There are some real good cities lining up," said Steve Penny, president of USA Gymnastics. "It's going to be a tough race. It's important to take the time to make the right decision, to find a city that represents a very bold message."

Blackmun said there were no major changes in the decision-making process that stemmed from the International Olympic Committee's Agenda 2020—an attempt to streamline the bidding process and make the Olympics less expensive. He and chairman Larry Probst said there was no move to have two cities combine on a bid—a possibility raised in Agenda 2020.

All the cities had their mayors or mayor-elects there, along with the bids' power players. They included Giants owner Larry Baer for San Francisco, agent and media mogul Casey Wasserman for Los Angeles, construction magnate John Fish for Boston and Wizards and Capitals owner Ted Leonsis for Washington.

"We're not going to leave a bill for future generations," Boston Mayor Marty Walsh told The Associated Press, hammering home a theme of cost-effectiveness that the USOC has insisted on from the start of this process.

Also represented was the group No Boston Olympics, the most organized protest group in the four cities, which unfurled a banner outside the meeting place in Redwood City, California. The group cited polling data that showed tepid support, along with the secretive process of the domestic selection process, as among the reasons to reject the Olympics.

Blackmun said the protest groups won't scare the USOC.

"Once we pick a city and the city has more freedom (to outline details of its bid), I think you'll see opposition decline," he said. "You'll see that each bid is fiscally responsible."

The cities all came in with projected operating budgets of between $4 billion and $5 billion, though that cost almost always skyrockets, and doesn't include the infrastructure and other Olympic-related improvements cities make.

Blackmun said the cities had to show how an Olympics would fit into their long-term plans - an element the IOC also thinks is important as it tries to end the days of billion-dollar roads, stadiums and airports that are only partially used once the Olympics leave town.

Also important to the U.S. bid is the USOC's reputation overseas. Blackmun and Probst have spent more than four years traveling the world to repair frayed relations that played into the country's last two losses.

"They've done a tremendous job," said Max Siegel, CEO of USA Track and Field. "They've been consistent, deliberate, invested in building meaningful relationships. Where we operate, I think people are noticing there's a genuine effort to be a contributing member."

AP

Monaco policemen stand in front of Olympic rings displayed on a flower bed in front of the Grimaldi Forum conference and congress center where the International Olympic Committee executive board meeting took place in Monaco, Friday, Dec. 5, 2014.

Yankees GM Cashman: A-Rod now a full-time DH

NEW YORK (AP)—Alex Rodriguez faces a diminished role in his return to the New York Yankees, who have stripped A-Rod of his third-base job and plan to limit his role to full-time designated hitter - at most.

General manager Brian Cashman said Tuesday that A-Rod's days as an everyday fielder are over in the Bronx and Chase Headley will start at third after agreeing this week to a $52 million, four-year contract.

Coming off a season-long suspension for violations of baseball's drug agreement and labor contract, Rodriguez will have to compete with Martin Prado for time as Headley's backup at third.

"I can't expect Alex to be anything," Cashman said during a telephone interview with The Associated Press. "I've got to think the worst and hope for the best. Even before the suspension, he wasn't the same player at third base on the defensive or offensive side. And that was before the suspension.

"And now he's been out of the game for a year. He's approaching 40 years of age. And just to automatically assume given his circumstances that he'll be able to plug right in, play third as an everyday guy and hold up and be productive, I think that would be dangerous thinking from my perspective, in the seat I'm sitting in."

Rodriguez turns 40 in July and has not played a full season since 2007 because of leg injuries, operations on both hips and the suspension. Cashman said A-Rod will have to prove to manager Joe Girardi he can play the field.

"So given all that circumstance, we look forward to him hopefully solidifying himself as a tremendous DH for us, and if he shows he has retained athleticism, then he can play third as a choice when Joe decides to give Headley a rest," Cashman said. "He can compete for Joe's thought process, whether it's Prado swinging over or Alex playing third."

Cashman said he has not spoken with Rodriguez about his new role.

"I don't need to. I've been very consistent with my conversations publicly from October on," he said. "I have not heard from Alex on any of that, and I know he reads all this stuff."

Rodriguez is owed $61 million by the Yankees in the final three seasons of his contract, and New York could use improvement at DH—its players there combined to hit .230 this year (12th in the AL) with 18 homers (11th), 63 RBIs (13th), a .290 on-base percentage (14th) and a .372 slugging percentage (12th), according to STATS.

Acquired from San Diego in July, Headley convinced the Yankees to keep him. He will get $13 million each year and the chance to earn an additional $1 million annually in performance bonuses based on plate appearances. He would receive a one-time $1 million assignment bonus if traded.

"We measure a lot of different things on the hitting analytics as well as our scouting assessments of him," Cashman said. "He's got plate discipline. He's got power. ... We like his leadership. We like his abilities. We think he's an exceptional defender."

Headley hit .229 with seven homers and 32 RBIs last season for the Padres and .262 with six homers and 17 RBIs in 191 at-bats for New York. His offense improved after a herniated disk in his back was treated with an epidural injection June 20.

"If the back rears its ugly head, we know the process necessary to deal with that. So it was a risk that we felt worth taking," Cashman said.

New York anticipates Headley, a 2012 Gold Glove winner, will be joined in the infield most days by Didi Gregorius at shortstop, Prado at second and Mark Teixeira at first.

"We believe we now have a very strong defensive infield," Cashman said, "that will serve our pitching staff and our run prevention well."

NFL employees turn over phone, email records

NEW YORK (AP)—Nearly 500 employees at NFL headquarters in New York turned over phone and email records to investigators looking into how Commissioner Roger Goodell and his staff pursued and handled evidence in the Ray Rice case, two people familiar with the situation told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

The people spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because details of the investigation won't be made public until former FBI director Robert S. Mueller III releases his report. The report is expected to be completed this month, one of the sources said.

Mueller has been investigating whether anyone at the NFL had seen or obtained video of the former Baltimore Ravens running back striking his then-fiancee inside an elevator at an Atlantic City, New Jersey casino before the video was posted online.

League employees were instructed to cooperate with Mueller's team of investigators and respond immediately to requests for information, the sources said.

Investigators zeroed in on phone calls made from NFL offices to numbers with a New Jersey area code. Employees also were asked to identify certain numbers in question and investigators even called some of the numbers to verify call recipients.

A representative for Mueller, who led the FBI for 12 years under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, declined comment.

Mueller's team is trying to identify who called a law enforcement official who said he mailed a DVD of the video to league headquarters to the attention of the NFL's security chief. The official played for the AP a 12-second voicemail from an NFL office number dated April 9, where a woman confirms receipt of the video.

Mueller now works in private practice in a Washington law firm. His probe is being overseen by owners John Mara of the New York Giants and Art Rooney of the Pittsburgh Steelers and the league said three months ago that Mueller would have access to all NFL records and would have full cooperation from league personnel.

Grizzlies end Warriors' 16-game win streak

AP
Memphis Grizzlies center Marc Gasol (33) blocks a shot by Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry in the second half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2014, in Memphis, Tenn. The Grizzlies beat the Warriors, 105-98.

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—A big boost from the very deep Memphis bench put a stop to the Golden State Warriors' 16-game winning streak.

With all backups on the floor, Vince Carter and the Grizzlies scored 20 straight points to start the second quarter and went on to beat Golden State 105-98 on Tuesday night.

"They punched us in the mouth to start the second quarter, and that was the difference in the game," Golden State coach Steve Kerr said.

Carter scored 11 of his season-high 16 points during the decisive run. Marc Gasol scored 24 points and Zach Randolph had 17 points and 10 rebounds as Memphis earned its fifth straight win.

Mike Conley had 17 points and reserve Jon Leuer added 11 for the Grizzlies. Memphis trailed 30-24 before holding the Warriors scoreless for the first five minutes of the second period.

"They deserve all the credit for what they did," Gasol said of the bench. "They came in, and I thought defensively they did an amazing job playing from one side of the floor helping the other side ... Young guy Vince made some tough shots."

The Warriors came in with the NBA's best record at 21-2 and longest winning streak in franchise history. They lost for the first time since Nov. 11 against the Spurs, also the last team to beat Memphis. This was the first time in NBA history in which both teams had 19 or more wins in the first 24 games—the Grizzlies improved to 20-4.

"We understand it was a nice run and something the franchise has never done before," Golden State star Stephen Curry said. "It's put us in a good position to take a tough loss like we did tonight and keep moving. We'll be all right. . It was fun while it lasted."

Curry missed back-to-back 3-pointers in the final 10 seconds. He had 19 points on 9-of-25 shooting, including a 1-for-10 night from beyond the arc.

Klay Thompson scored 22 points for the Warriors, and Marreese Speights had 18. Harrison Barnes scored 11 points while playing with a mask to protect a broken bone in his face.

The Warriors trailed by as many as 14 and got within two twice in the fourth quarter, the last at 90-88 on an alley-oop dunk for Livingston with 5:09 to go. Memphis responded with a 7-0 run capped by two foul shots for Courtney Lee after Kerr and Warriors guard Andre Iguodala each picked up a technical foul.

Golden State closed a three-game road swing with 7-foot center Andrew Bogut sitting out a fourth straight game with a right knee injury and David Lee still out with a hamstring problem. The Warriors countered the size difference inside with Curry and Thompson going to the basket repeatedly. They managed to tie Memphis with 50 points in the paint.

That Memphis run was one of the best in franchise history as the Grizzlies hit their first six shots of the period. Carter hit three of his 3-pointers in the surge, helping Memphis to a 57-49 lead at halftime.

Golden State turned the ball over seven times in the third quarter. ... Draymond Green had a career-high five blocks as Golden State had a season-high 11 blocks. Green blocked Randolph twice in the same sequence in the third quarter before Randolph finally scored over him. Green had four blocks in a game five times previously, the last Sunday at New Orleans.

That 20-0 run at the start of the second quarter was the third-longest consecutive point streak in franchise history. ... The Grizzlies and Warriors don't play again until March 27 in Memphis. ... They have won 10 of 11 in this series in Memphis.

Heat 95, Nets 91

In New York, Dwyane Wade had a stomach virus and missed Miami's shootaround on Tuesday. He wasn't sure if he would be able to play against Brooklyn.

Once the game started, the star guard looked just fine.

Wade scored 28 points to lead the Heat to a 95-91 victory over the Nets. He was 12 for 24 from the field and also contributed five rebounds and four assists.

"I had three pieces of toast and two bananas," Wade said. "That's all I had to eat today, but it got me through. If I'm going to be out here I might as well do something. Otherwise I might as well have stayed in the hotel."

The Heat had five players score in double figures, including three reserves. Starting forward Luol Deng had 18 points, and rookie Shabazz Napier scored 11.

The game was delayed for 29 minutes in the first quarter when the installation of a new green roof at Barclays Center led to a water leak.

"I didn't even know it was raining outside," said Joe Johnson, who scored 16 points for the Nets. "I was like 'How the hell we got a leak if it ain't raining.'"

Mason Plumlee had 21 points and nine rebounds for Brooklyn, and Deron Williams added 15 points and 11 assists.

The Heat led by as many as 13 points in the fourth quarter, but the Nets closed to 93-91 on Bojan Bogdanovic's 3-pointer with 35 seconds left.

After a Miami timeout, Wade missed a long 3, but Bogdanovic was called for a loose ball foul on Deng.

Pelicans 119, Jazz 111

In New Orleans, Anthony Davis returned from a chest injury and scored 31 points, helping New Orleans rally for the win.

Davis, who missed most of Friday night's victory over Cleveland and all of Sunday night's loss to Golden State, played with a protective vest that did not appear to inhibit him. He had nine rebounds and three blocks, with all three rejections coming in the pivotal final four minutes.

Ryan Anderson hit six 3-pointers and finished with 28 points for New Orleans, while Tyreke Evans added 19 points, scoring nine during New Orleans' 41-point fourth quarter.

Enes Kanter scored 29 points for Utah, which has lost three straight and 12 of 13.

Mavericks 107, Knicks 87

In New York, Tyson Chandler had three dunks during Dallas' sizzling start to his return to New York, and Dirk Nowitzki scored 16 points for the Mavericks.

Chandler played a key role in the NBA's highest-scoring team putting together a nearly unstoppable start that gave it the lead for good. Monta Ellis added 14 points, and Chandler Parsons had 13 after missing a game with a sore lower back.

Carmelo Anthony scored 26 points for the Knicks. Tim Hardaway Jr. had 14 but was 5 for 17 in another poor shooting effort.

Shortly after hearing mostly cheers during introductions, Chandler dunked a lob pass for the game's opening basket. He threw down another alley-oop that gave Dallas 10 baskets in its first 11 shots.

Wizards 109, Timberwolves 95

In Washington, John Wall scored 21 points and equaled a career high with 17 assists, helping Washington to its fifth consecutive win.

Washington scored 14 straight to take a 14-2 lead less than 4 1/2 minutes into the game. Wall had 10 points and six assists in the first quarter.

Rasual Butler had 23 points for the Wizards.

Thaddeus Young, who led a third-quarter charge, had a season-high 29 points for Minnesota, which has lost nine of 10. Shabazz Muhammad scored 21.

Thunder 104, Kings 92

In Sacramento, Russell Westbrook had 32 points and seven assists, Kevin Durant scored 26 points and the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the reeling Sacramento Kings 104-92 on Tuesday night for their seventh straight win.

The Kings played their first game since Michael Malone was fired as coach and lead assistant Tyrone Corbin was promoted to the head job, and trailed 9-0 after 2 1-2 minutes. They dropped to 2-8 while franchise centerpiece DeMarcus Cousins recovers from viral meningitis.

SIDEBAR

Kings owner considering Mullin for coaching job

SACRAMENTO (AP)—Owner Vivek Ranadive is giving serious consideration to hiring Chris Mullin to coach the Sacramento Kings.

In the wake of Michael Malone's firing on Sunday night, Ranadive has been soliciting counsel on Mullin's candidacy and has grown increasingly intrigued with the kind of acumen and star power Mullin, an ownership adviser for the Kings, could bring to the franchise, sources said.

"All [Mullin] has to decide is that's what he wants and the job is his," an NBA general manager said on Monday.

The Kings will keep Tyrone Corbin as the interim coach for the near future, but haven't ruled out the hiring of a full-time coach sometime this season. George Karl has a strong history with general manager Pete D'Alessandro and began campaigning for the job on Monday within hours of Malone's firing. For now, Karl's a secondary candidate until Ranadive considers the possibility of Mullin.

Ranadive's reference point on the NBA has often been the Golden State Warriors, with whom he had been a minority owner, and he's been enthralled with the success of Steve Kerr. Like Kerr, Mullin would be an ex-player with a GM background making the move to coaching. Mullin is an NBA Hall of Famer who played the prime of his career in the '80s and '90s in Northern California with the Warriors.

Mullin hasn't come close to committing to the coaching idea, but there's support in ownership and in the front office for him to give it significant thought, sources said.

Karl is a strong candidate among D'Alessandro and assistant GM Mike Bratz, who worked with Karl as part of the Denver Nuggets organization. Nevertheless, Ranadive is far more intrigued with the possibility of making a splashy hire, and D'Alessandro supports the idea of Mullin if he decides he wants to commit himself to coaching, sources said. Ranadive is working to construct a new arena in Sacramento and has craved star power with the Kings.

Meanwhile, Milwaukee Bucks forward Jabari Parker left the Milwaukee Bucks' game against the Phoenix Suns early in the third quarter because of a left knee sprain.

The Bucks said Monday night Parker would not return.

Parker's knee appeared to buckle on a drive to the basket before he collided with the Suns' P.J. Tucker, and Parker was unable to get to his feet immediately afterward.

Parker, the Bucks' first-round draft pick this year and the second player chosen overall, had to be carried off the court by teammates to the locker room.

Parker had eight points in 15 minutes. He's averaging 12.5 points and 5.6 rebounds per game.

Rintaro, Conatsu top SSC run

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Rintaro Miyawaki and Conatsu Kaga emerged as top finishers in yesterday's Saipan Swim Club 8th Jingle Bell Fun Run.

Miyawaki completed the 4.5-kilometer course that started and ended at the Minatchom Atdao pavilion across the Oleai Sports Complex with a turnaround at the Quartermaster Road in 19:12, missing the record (17:51) of last year's overall top finisher Seiya Eda by just less than two minutes and surpassing the time (19:40) of 2012 champion Steve Pixley.

Conatsu came in more than a minute behind Miyawaki, but her 20:17 led the girls field. Conatsu defeated younger sister Coume, who reached the finish line fourth overall with her 23:22. Lennosuke Suzuki was the third overall finisher and second in the boys division after clocking in at 20:43.

Rinto Takahashi and Taiga Sato completed the Top 5 overall after submitting identical times of 23:55.

Lennosuke's sibling, Jinnosuke, and Victoria Chentsova placed sixth and seventh, respectively, after tallying 24:07 and 24:08, while R.J. Pierce finished eighth with his 25:25.

Four other runners rounded the Top 10 with the trio of Christian Villacrusis, Kento Akimaru, and David Boyer crossing the finish line together and timing in at 25:25 and Wataru Kadokura recording 26:46. Wataru placed ahead of his older brother Akira, who posted 27:27.

More than 30 runners joined the annual event, about 50 short of last year's count (88). There were lesser participants this year than last's, as some runners had earlier commitments.

The fun run was SSC's last event for this year, but several more are lined up in 2015. The club will start the new year with the Masters Meet on Jan. 24, followed by the Meek and Mighty Ocean Swim on Feb. 7. Other events remaining in SSC's 2014-2015 calendar are the SSC International Meet (March 13 and 14), Escape from Managaha (April 11), Swim Marathon (April 23), Guam B/C Champs (May 2), Guam Swimming Federation Championships (May 29-30), Summer Fun Open Water 1 (June 6), Eagle Ray Ocean Swim (June 21), Summer Fun Open Water 2 (July 18), FINA World Championships 50m (July 24), and Summer Fun Open Water 3 (Aug. 2).

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Rintaro Miyawaki keeps his pace heading into the finish line of yesterday's Saipan Swim Club 8th Jingle Bell Fun Run.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Conatsu Kaga is on her way to a first place finish in the girls division of yesterday's Saipan Swim Club 8th Jingle Bell Fun Run.

Rogolifoi to conduct five-day umpires certification course

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Saipan Baseball League coordinator Tony Rogolifoi will be holding a Level I umpiring certification course starting tonight at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium conference room.

The five-day session starts at 5:30pm and Rogolifoi is calling on individuals interested in joining the umpiring ranks to attend the 10-hour course.

"I'm inviting everyone and other interested parties to join this important event. We need a lot of help in this area—umpiring—particularly for the local Little League program," said Rogolifoi, who also encourages team managers and coaches to join the umpiring course.

In related news, the new SBL season is set to open on Jan. 12, with the defending champion Brewers opening up their title bid against the Fielders.

The North Starz, A's, Jets, and Falcons are the other competing teams in the 2015 season. Games will be played every Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 6:30pm at the Francisco M. "Tan Ko" Palacios baseball field.

Rogolifoi said the the league could still accept one or two more teams provided they will join at least one week before the opening of the season.

"If there are still interested teams out there they should call and inform me immediately. We could still accommodate one or two teams," said Rogolifoi.

He added that interested teams must turn in a copy of their 25-man rosters and waiver forms, prepare their own uniforms, and pay the $1,000 entrance fee.

For more information, call Rogolifoi at 234-6672.

Jets thankful for support in fundraiser

Jets manager Froilan Camacho Jr. would like to thank all the supporters of their two fundraising events at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

The Jets, who held two softball tournaments, are fundraising to come up with the money that would support their campaign in the upcoming Saipan Baseball League season set on Jan. 12 at the Francisco M. "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

A total of 15 teams joined the weekend tournament on Oct. 10 to 12 and Dec. 12 to 14.

Team Akkari, which also topped a similar fundraising event for the Sta. Lourdes fiesta in September, won the October games, while Team Familia ruled this month's tournament.

Team Jada, Team Vinnie, Team Unknown, Team Jets, Team G4, Man Gachung and Team Pinigan competed in October, while Team Jets, Team Cornboys, Jets Manhoben and Team Things-Berdax joined last weekend's contest.

Camacho also acknowledged the support of representative-elect Ed Villagomez, the fans who watched and supported their respective teams, and all the sponsors that helped them hold both tournaments.

Joeten, All Star Sporting Goods, Fishing Tackle and Sportings Goods, Tan Siu Lin Foundation, Pacific Islands Club, Kanoa Resort, Fiesta Resort & Spa, J's Resturant, Marpac, Pacific Trading Co., Joeten Superstore, Twins Supermarket, Kevin's Mart, Kulan Zamu, Fotten Gaga were the other sponsors of the two tournaments and provided raffle prizes. ***(Jon Perez)***

SBC

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In the title game, SBC showed its strong intention of keeping the crown with Hannah Choi teaming up with Alma Ortega and Julie Lee in collecting 6 quick points in the women's AB and AA events. Three points are awarded to a team that wins a match in two games, while 2 points are given to the winning squad and one to its opponents if the match goes to three.

Choi and Ortega opened Day 1 with a 21-8, 21-12 win over Lani Bartolome and Windy Fernandez in the AA doubles division. Choi then joined Lee in dispatching Bartolome and sister Lot Caracut, 21-7, 21-11, in the women's AB doubles event.

Shirley's got its first points (2) courtesy of Jaja Bocago and Vilma Reyes in the women's BC. Bocago and Reyes escaped with a 24-22, 10-21, 21-17 decision against the SBC pair of Diane Francisco and Bae Woo Kyung.

The close win in the women's double BC, however, failed to spark a Shirley's rally, allowing SBC to sweep the last two events—the women's BB and men's AB.

Ortega and Francisco made short work of Bocago and Caracut, 21-9, 21-8 in the women's doubles BB, while Glenn Buultjens and Youngson Yu trounced Ferdie Arago and Jeff Riman, 21-15, 21-14, in their men's AB tiff.

With SBC holding 13 points, it only needed 3 more to seal the title in the race-to-16 championship showdown.

Yu and Jongmin Lee then moved SBC closer to the crown, earning 2 points after a 21-18, 20-22, 21-18 win over Riman and Jerry Hibi in the men's doubles B, while Hancheol Yu and Oh Im Bog clinched the championship for the favored team after they defeated Aries Cordero and Patrick Ferenandez in the men's BC, 22-20, 21-13.

The final three matches in the title duel—the mixed BC and BB, and men's CC— were still played even though SBC had the championship in the bag with its 18 points.

Shirley's salvaged a little pride with wins in the last three matches. It collected 2 points after Reyes and Cris Hilario's 21-19, 15-21, 21-17 triumph over Oh and Bae Woo Kyung in the mixed BC. In the mixed BB, Cordero and Windy Fernandez escaped with a 21-17, 16-21, 22-20 decision over Yun Jun Lee and Rowena Sison, while Patrick Fernandez and Leo Xu scored a 21-12, 21-19 win against Hancehol Yu and Daniel Kim in the men's CC.

Meanwhile, Golden Racquets bagged third place after beating CBC, 17-13, in the consolation contest.

CBC entered the final day of its match against Golden Racquets with a 9-6 lead , but could not sustain its momentum, dropping a 4-11 tally to surrender the third place honors.

Golden Racquets collected 9 points with wins in the men's BC and C, and mixed BB divisions, and added 2 markers in the men's B.

Eydie Uy and Vic Regis defeated John Costales and Owen Ou, 21-12, 21-5; Noli Santos and Cheng Saturno tripped Ou and Mykki Caracut, 21-9, 21-11; and Uy and Ronnie Tan topped Costales and Kevin Park, 21-15, 21-16.

CBC had 3 points in the mixed BC courtesy of Caracut and Deether Edralin, who beat the husband-and-wife tandem of Jojo and Merlie Savellano, 21-15, 21-17.

Santos and Edwin Maratas gave Golden Racquets 2 more points following a 21-17, 11-21, 21-19 triumph over Edralin and Zeke Macario.

SCHORR

From Page 28

ond singles match, she paired with Ella Hunt in battling Tully Richter and Kara Tscharke. Richter and Tscharke prevailed, 3-6, 2-6.

With a 0-3 record, Miyawaki will aim to bounce back when she faces Georgia Tovic today in the southern side of the draw.

In the boys 12U, Schorr also failed to win his opening match, but he recovered quickly. He fell to the No. 15-ranked Jasper Benson last Tuesday, 2-6, 2-6, before battling back with a tough 7-6 (5), 6-4 win over Rueben Giorgio yesterday afternoon. Next up for Schorr is Ethan Cook, a 6-2, 7-5 winner against Alexander Placek.

In the doubles, Schorr and his teammate—China's Bo Yao Huang—were scheduled to challenge Jacob Bradshaw and Ethan Waugh last night.

Meanwhile, both Miyawaki and Schorr also competed in the 2014 Australia Team Championships, but results of their matches were not posted at the Tennis Australia website.

DCCA

From Page 28

win over Feds and earned the twice-to-beat advantage.

Game 1 of the finals is set this Friday at 6:30pm, while Game 2, if necessary, will be played on Dec. 22, also at the same time.

DCCA used a second-quarter scoring spree to pull away and cruise to the lopsided win.

Ray Deleon Guerrero Jr., Joe Ito, Edgar Pangelinan, and Tim Wesley combined for 30 of DCCA's 34 points in the second period, helping turn a 19-11 lead to a 53-22 halftime spread.

DCCA just cruised from there and never let its guard down to completely dominate Customs the entire match.

Tim Wesley scored 18 points to lead five other DCCA players who turned in double-digit numbers. He also had 5 rebounds and one assist. Sweet-shooting Edgar Pangelinan finished with 16 markers and buried four of DCCA's eight shots from downtown. Deleon Guerrero Jr. and Perry Inos tallied 12 points apiece, while Robert Deleon Guerrero and Joe Ito, who also had a team-high 5 steals, chipped in 10 markers each.

L.J. Reyes paced Customs' losing cause with his 27 points, 6 rebounds, 2 assists, and 5 steals, while Jack Cepeda tallied 14 markers and Dave Camacho finished with 10 points, 15 rebounds, and 6 steals.

Customs played without Leo Galarse, who dropped 19 points in their 61-57 win against Department of Public Safety last Monday.

DCCA 101–Wesley 18, Pangelinan 16, R. Deleon Guerrero Jr. 12, Inos 12, Ro. Deleon Guerrero 10, Ito 10, Aaron 9, John 2, Manabat 2.

Customs 68—Reyes 27, Cepeda 14, Camacho 10, Saralu 8, Fitial 7, Lizama 2.

Scoring by quarters: 19-11, 53-22, 69-43, 101-68.

2014 CFL Youth Football League

PHOTOS BY JON PEREZ

The Northern Vikings' Don Pangelinan sacks Eastern Lightning quarterback Donavin Ada during their game in the 2014 Commonwealth Football League Association Youth Football last Saturday at the CPA Airport Field.

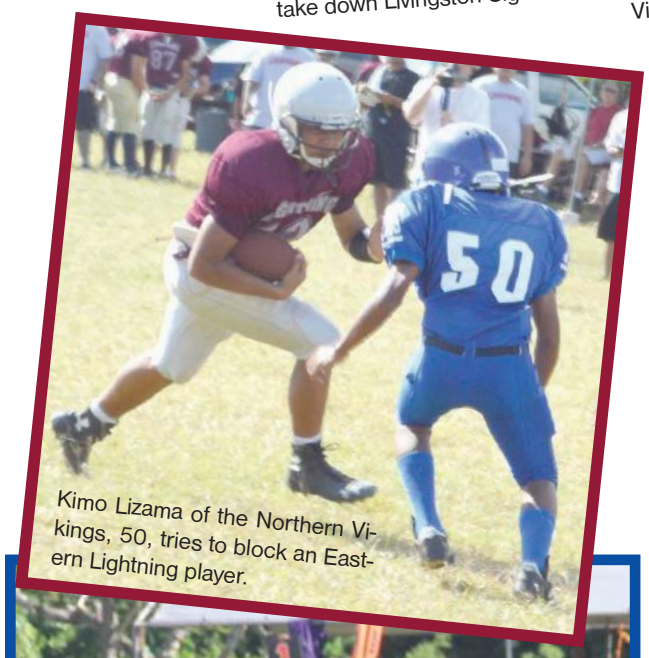
Mariano Quitugua of the Northern Vikings, left, catches a pass while the Eastern Lightning's Zander Tkel, 3, and Kimo Angailen try to chase him.

Northern Vikings quarterback Anthony Qutitugua, left, tries to outrun N-Nes Siech of the Southern Thunder in their game last Dec. 6.

Two Eastern Lightning players attempt to take down Livingston Sigrah of the Northern Vikings.

The Northern Vikings' Don Pangelinan, partly hidden, and a teammate try to protect quarterback Anthony Quitugua against the Southern Thunder's Jeremy Agulto, 6, and Brent Azarcon.

A Southern Thunder player, left, tries to protect teammate N-Nes Siech.



Kimo Lizama of the Northern Vikings, 50, tries to block an Eastern Lightning player.

Players from the Southern Thunder and Northern Vikings accidentally hit the game official.

Jose Camacho of the Eastern Lightning brings down Mariano Kaipat of the Northern Vikings.

A Southern Thunder player tries to block Derick Aguon of the Northern Vikings.

4 US cities to bid for 2024 Summer Olympics

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JON PEREZ
Saipan Badminton Club members pose for a group photo after clinching their fourth straight title in the 8th Annual Traders Insurance Badminton Team Tournament last Sunday at TSL Sports Complex.

SBC retains Traders tourney crown

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Saipan Badminton Club completed its title defense bid after posting a masterful 21-9 demolition of Shirley's Badminton Club in the finals of the 8th Annual Traders Insurance Badminton Team Tournament over the weekend at the TSL Sports Complex.

SBC earned its fourth straight crown in the lone team tournament sanctioned by the Northern Marianas Badminton Association. The four-time champion dominated the single round robin elimination, collecting 80 of the 120 points at stake in the month-long tournament to clinch the first finals berth.

Shirley's, meanwhile, had to meet Community Badminton Club for the right to face SBC in the championship match. Shirley's went on to post a 3-point edge against CBC, 69-66, to arrange a finals date with SBC.

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DCCA mauls Customs, keeps finals bid alive

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Department of Community and Cultural Affairs buried Customs in an avalanche of points, 101-68, in their playoff match in the 2014 IT&E-DYS Inter-government Basketball League last night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

With the rout, DCCA earned the right to face Feds at 6:30pm tonight for the second and last finals seat with the winner advancing against Northern Marianas Sports Association. NMSA clinched the first championship berth after escaping with a 68-67

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JON PEREZ
Department of Community and Cultural Affairs' Robert Deleon Guerrero, 7, provides a screen for his driving teammate Jayson John, 12, during their playoff game against Customs last night in the 2014 IT&E-DYS Inter-government Basketball League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Schorr, Miyawaki compete in Australia

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The CNMI's Robbie Schorr and Malika Miyawaki are in Australia, competing in the 2014 12U Australian Championships in Melbourne, Victoria.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Malika Miyawaki, seen here serving during the 6th Tan Holdings Tennis Classic last month, is competing in Australia.

The two Commonwealth junior tennis players are part of the ITF-Pacific Oceania Touring Team and are participating in both the singles and doubles events in the six-day tournament that started last Tuesday. Miyawaki and Schorr earned spots on the elite squad after their impressive showings in the 2014 Pacific Oceania Junior Championships held in Fiji in August. Both CNMI players made it to the semifinal round of the POJC.

"Both players are competing in Australia for the first time and they are very thrilled and thankful for the chance to play there. For Malika, it has been her dream to make it to the touring team, so I hope she makes the most out of it," Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association official Jeff Race said.

Malika debuted in the Land Down Under tournament last Tuesday and dropped her opening match in the 64-player main draw. She lost to Australia's Mia Repac, 2-6, 2-1, to fall to the consolation draw. In her second match, which lasted for about two hours, Miyawaki played better, but still bowed to the host's Jasmine Adams, 2-6, 4-6.

The Saipan International School student played back-to-back games yesterday, as less than three hours after her sec-

See SCHORR on Page 26